



AMCEN

AU

Distr.: General

22 June 2016

Original: English

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Sixth special session

Ministerial segment

Cairo, 18 and 19 April 2016

Report of the ministerial segment held on 18 and 19 April 2016

I. Introduction

1. The ministerial segment of the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held at the Dusit Thani Lakeview Hotel in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016.
2. It was attended by representatives of AMCEN member States and of African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations entities, secretariats of various environmental conventions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

II. Opening of the meeting

3. An opening ceremony began at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, 18 April 2016, with welcoming remarks by Mr. Khaled Fahmy, Minister of Environment of Egypt and President of AMCEN.
4. The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister of Egypt, on behalf of Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of Egypt. Opening statements were made by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ms. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission; Mr. Anthony Nyong, representing the President of the African Development Bank; Mr. Roberto Ridolfi, Director of the Directorate for Sustainable Growth and Development, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission; and Mr. Stéphane Gompertz, French Climate Ambassador for Africa and the Middle East, on behalf of Ms. Ségolène Royal, President of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the twenty-first session of the Conference and Minister of the Environment, Energy and the Sea.
5. The segment began with the viewing of a short video presentation entitled "Our Earth". A minute of silence was observed in memory of Mr. Moustafa Tolba, former Executive Director of UNEP.
6. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Fahmy said that Egypt was honoured to host the sixth special session one year after hosting the fifteenth session of AMCEN in Cairo in March 2015. The issues discussed and the decisions made during the ministerial segment of the current session would enable AMCEN to continue to provide leadership in promoting regional cooperation on the environment and sustainable development, for which it was essential to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by such frameworks as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora. He emphasized the need to harness the natural capital of Africa in development planning with a view to achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and to establish partnerships between countries aimed at tackling environmental challenges and implementing strategies that would benefit future generations. He called on ministers and leaders to take responsibility to ensure that the mandate of AMCEN was translated into action and visible results on the ground.

Note: The present document is being issued in English and French only.

7. In his statement, Mr. Thiaw recalled that AMCEN had been established in Cairo in December 1985. The current session was taking place ahead of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016, and the World Environment Day celebrations in Angola on 5 June 2016. Emphasizing the importance of harnessing the full potential of Africa's natural capital as a means of transforming its socioeconomic development through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, he said that there was an urgent need to reconcile social, economic and environmental interests locally, regionally and nationally and to establish a common, coordinated response to combating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora and the effects of climate change.
8. In her statement, Ms. Tumusiime conveyed the gratitude of the African Union Commission to Egypt for hosting the sixth special session and to the AMCEN secretariat for its continuous collaboration and support. She expressed satisfaction that ministers would deliberate on the implementation mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda, its Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement during the sixth special session, and she urged them to adopt appropriate strategies and ensure the necessary political commitment at the highest level. The Sustainable Development Goals were complementary and lent support to the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which provided a pathway for development, peace, security and environmental sustainability in Africa through the rational use of the continent's natural resources and the mitigation of the adverse impacts of climate change. She said that one of the key outcomes of the Paris Agreement had been the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, a transformative effort to accelerate and scale up the harnessing of Africa's huge renewable energy potential. She commended member States for their commitment in tackling the challenges of illegal wildlife trade through the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora and for their guidance in drafting the African Union Strategy on Climate Change, aimed at ensuring climate resilient development on the continent.
9. In his statement, Mr. Ismail said that it was an honour for Egypt to host the sixth special session of AMCEN following the adoption of such global environmental milestones as Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, which he hoped would strengthen partnerships and lead to an increase in collaborative efforts to address some of the most pressing social and environmental challenges facing the world. To that end, Egypt was committed to the preservation of Africa's natural capital through the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Africa Adaptation Initiative and the African Union's Agenda 2063. He reported on the adoption of Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, the main pillars of which were social justice, knowledge and innovation, economic development and the environment.
10. In his statement, Mr. Nyong said that 2015 had marked an important milestone in global efforts to steer the world on a sustainable development pathway through the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and he commended the efforts of AMCEN, the African Union Commission and other partners in ensuring that Africa's interests were captured in those initiatives. Emphasizing the importance of conserving the continent's natural resources, he said that the African Development Bank would continue to support the implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative. Following consultations on the needs and aspirations of African countries, the Bank had identified five priority aims: to expand the provision of electricity for light and power in Africa; to feed Africa; to industrialize Africa; to integrate Africa; and to improve the lives of Africans.
11. In his statement, Mr. Ridolfi said that there was an urgent need to put the planet on a path of sustainable development by promoting a transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns. In that regard, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda called for domestic resource mobilization, along with public policies and regulatory frameworks that put in place incentives to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. For financing to reach the real beneficiaries, innovative approaches and structured dialogues with partner countries and with the public and private sectors were required. To that end, the European Commission had recently launched two flagship initiatives (the Electrification Financing Initiative (ElectriFI) and the Agriculture Financing Initiative (AgriFI)) to finance access to energy and boost productive climate-smart agriculture and value chains. He said that Africa and Europe had been long-time allies in the fight against global environmental challenges and that the priority topic of wildlife trafficking was a good example; a clear joint commitment was required at the political level, however, to address the corruption on which the illegal trade in wildlife thrived. Another example of the strong alliance between the European Union and Africa was the initiative of Botswana to promote the use of natural capital accounting.

12. In his statement, Mr. Gompertz thanked the ministers for their active and constructive participation in the Paris Agreement negotiations and for the organization of the African Pavilion at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, during which Africa had spoken with one voice and achieved the inclusion in the Agreement of a 1.5°C global warming target in article 2, the balanced treatment of adaptation and mitigation, and a call for financial support from developed countries. He outlined the French presidential, ministerial, ambassadorial and technical visits that had taken place in Africa and the joint work undertaken for the twenty-first session. He said that France was paying close attention to the progress made in the context of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and Africa Adaptation Initiative and working closely with the Government of Morocco in the run-up to the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 7 to 18 November 2016.

13. Additional statements were made on the morning of Tuesday, 19 April, by Ms. Hakima El Haite, Minister Delegate in Charge of Environment of Morocco, and President-designate for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

14. Ms. El Haite made an appeal to all AMCEN member States to play an active role in the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Recalling that 2015 had been a memorable year for the people of Africa with the adoption of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change, and an opportunity to write a new page in the history of civilization on the continent, she said that in 2016 and at the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties African countries had to ensure that the necessary tools were provided to achieve the frameworks put in place, to enable the fight against poverty and address the lack of access to water, energy and education in Africa and to counter the effects of climate change that were bringing instability and economic losses to African nations. The overarching ambition of the twenty-second session was to set an agenda for dignity, operationalize the decisions of the Paris Agreement and enable Africa to realize its opportunities in renewable energy, agricultural production and rich biodiversity, and the session would be an opportunity to build on the efforts of the African Group of Negotiators. The Government of Morocco had been integrating climate concerns into its policies for a decade or more, notably in the renewable energy sector, and would share experiences and work with partners to put the Paris Agreement into practice; at the twenty-second session her Government aimed to expand the climate agenda to encompass more sectors of the economy, increase ambitions and ensure funding, technology transfer and a road map that were clear, transparent and quantified to enable African countries to plan their development and adapt to climate change.

15. Ms. Ishii, in her statement, also referred to 2015 as a defining year for humanity, saying that the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement offered the potential for a new start for the planet. She congratulated the AMCEN member States for their role in the adoption of those instruments and urged the ministers to maintain their progressive position on defining natural capital and accelerating implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would be an important opportunity to report on progress made. Singling out three key topics that were high on the agenda of the current meeting, she said that renewable energy, climate resilience and tackling the illegal trade in wildlife were areas where GEF was working to realize the tremendous possibilities for Africa. GEF had been supporting solar energy projects in Morocco and geothermal power development in Kenya and had held discussions with the African Development Bank on ways of working together to accelerate and scale up the renewable energy potential under the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative; under the Africa Adaptation Initiative, GEF was supporting the Great Green Wall initiative and food security projects in a number of African countries; and GEF had launched a major international effort to help tackle issues relating to the supply, trade and demand for wildlife products, among others.

III. Organizational matters

16. The President of AMCEN presided over the segment.

A. Adoption of the agenda

17. The representatives adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS/VI/1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Organization of work.
3. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group.
4. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.
5. Outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its implications for Africa.
6. Latest developments and the way forward for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Africa Adaptation Initiative.
7. Africa's engagement in the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.
8. Other matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment:
 - (a) Implementation of the African common strategy on combating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora;
 - (b) Implementation of the regional flagship programmes;
 - (c) The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.
9. Consideration of the draft declaration and draft decisions.
10. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment.
11. Other matters.
12. Closure of the meeting.

B. Organization of work

18. The Conference decided to address items 1–8 of the agenda on 18 April and the remainder on 19 April 2016.

IV. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group

19. The Chair of the expert segment of the sixth special session, Mr. Nehad Abdel Latif, Advisor to the Minister of Environment of Egypt and President of AMCEN on African Affairs and head of the AMCEN Unit in the Ministry, reported on the work and outcome of the segment, saying that the experts had established two working groups. The first, facilitated by a representative of the African Group of Negotiators, had deliberated on climate-change-related issues, including the Paris Agreement, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Africa Adaptation Initiative. The second, facilitated by Mr. Stuart Mangold (South Africa), had discussed issues pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, the implementation of the regional flagship programmes, the relationship between AMCEN and the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, and other issues raised by delegations. At the end of the meeting, the expert group had prepared a draft 2016 AMCEN special session Cairo Declaration and six draft decisions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's

Agenda 2063; on Africa's engagement in the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; on matters related to biodiversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; on action on desertification, drought, floods and restoring degraded lands; on climate change and Africa's preparations for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment. The draft declaration and draft decisions would be submitted for consideration and possible adoption during the ministerial segment on 19 April.

V. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

20. Introducing the item, Mr. Richard Munang, Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, gave a presentation in which he outlined the key issues relating to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, as detailed in the note by the Secretariat on the subject (AMCEN/SS/VI/3). His presentation focused on the investments needed for the implementation of the agenda, the decline in official development assistance, the value of Africa's natural capital and its contribution to growth, and Africa's natural capital losses from illicit financial flows and illegal activities. He emphasized that, by harnessing its rich abundance of natural capital in the ways described in the note, the continent could progress rapidly towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 15 in particular and, in so doing, realize the aspirations set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063 for "The Africa we want", with poverty on the run and prosperity on the rise.

21. In the ensuing discussion, numerous representatives said that there was a new imperative to shift focus towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the Paris Agreement. Two representatives noted that the Sustainable Development Goals had been integrated into Agenda 2063 and said that they must be likewise integrated into national development plans and strategies, with one saying that care must be taken to avoid overemphasis of certain goals at the expense of others, bearing in mind the overriding objective of poverty eradication. Another said that the key to achieving the objective lay in optimum management of the continent's vast natural capital. One representative suggested that a permanent think tank should be established to explore means of optimizing implementation of the global agenda and accomplishing agreed objectives. A representative of a non-governmental organization said that AMCEN had a critical role to play in the development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and that sustainable development and nature conservation formed the path to prosperity; her organization stood ready to support African efforts on that score by contributing its knowledge and expertise.

22. One representative called on all development partners to support national implementation efforts and to keep track of progress realized in that sphere, while others said that countries must demonstrate their commitment to such efforts in order to promote progress and attract funding from developed countries and relevant institutions, which was generally identified as a key concern. Another representative said that such funding must be both adequate and predictable and that there was a need for the allocation of national resources to offset dwindling amounts of official development assistance, a problem likewise highlighted by another representative, who also said that ecological and other considerations often overlooked must be taken on board in calculating such assistance for the purpose of protecting natural capital. He also spoke of the pertinence of long-standing cultural codes to current efforts to conserve natural capital.

23. One representative expressed the hope that the tremendous value of the natural capital in Africa would not weaken the case for holding developed countries to their commitments to provide assistance for implementation of the new global agenda. He added that institutional mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure that agreements concluded with regard to natural resources were neither exploitative nor conducive to losses of natural capital, with steps taken to mobilize support for those mechanisms by sensitizing the public to the value of that capital and the need to take ownership. One representative, supported by another, said that Africa must expedite and support local value addition initiatives throughout the continent.

24. One representative said that it was paradoxical that a continent so richly endowed with natural resources as Africa could be so poor; echoed by others, he said that training and capacity-building, including in the areas of access to funding, data generation and good governance, were vital tools for unlocking the continent's human potential and mobilizing its natural capital and resources for the

benefit of its populations. One representative said that it was necessary to invest in young people, through education and employment, with a view to Africa's renaissance.

25. Other issues identified during the discussion as vitally important included the use of natural capital accounting; access to the latest technologies; sharing of information and good practices; cooperation to combat illegal activities affecting natural capital; and investment in agriculture to enhance food security.

26. Two representatives called attention to the implications of such problems as land degradation, desertification and drought for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, saying that community resilience building and early warning activities were vital to the protection of livelihoods in that context. One of them said that his country was sponsoring a draft resolution for consideration at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the subject of the Great Green Wall initiative, desertification and land degradation in the interests of all African countries.

27. Several representatives emphasized the acceleration of measures for tackling climate change, including through the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Africa Adaptation Initiative, with one highlighting the cost of inaction and advocating the establishment of a mechanism for evaluating, as a matter of public policy, the impact of environmental degradation from climate change on natural capital. Another urged early finalization of the draft governance framework for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, thanking the African Development Bank for its financial support for measures for fast-tracking operationalization of the initiative. One representative said that available funding opportunities for mitigation and adaptation activities must be utilized, with another adding that delivery must match pledges made.

28. One representative endorsed the Egyptian offer to host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2018 and welcomed the hosting of the upcoming seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by South Africa, as well as the announcement by the representative of Namibia that his country was soon to host a global drought conference aimed at developing a strategic framework for action to combat drought in Africa. Another representative announced his country's hosting of a North African conference on the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, to which one representative responded by noting that such trade knew no boundaries and that the countries of the Maghreb must therefore fully engage in implementation of the Strategy. Another representative called for international support for that implementation.

29. The representative of Nigeria reported that his country intended to nominate its minister for the environment as one of the two vice-presidents from Africa to serve on the bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

30. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Munang said that the comments made would serve as useful guidance for the way forward and for the development of mechanisms for ensuring the contribution of natural capital to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through an innovative approach.

VI. Outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its implications for Africa

31. Under the item, Mr. Munang gave a presentation on bridging gaps in climate change implementation in Africa in the context of the Paris Agreement on climate change. He drew attention to the finding of the second edition of the *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report (2015) that Africa was the region that would experience climate deviation earlier than any other continent, a process that was already happening. He summarized the possible impacts of various temperature increase scenarios on agricultural yields, food security, nutrition values, gross domestic product and other indicators, each with devastating impacts on the economy and people of Africa. In addition, sea level rise was projected to affect urban areas, infrastructure and food supply in low-lying areas around the continent. Surface run-off and groundwater recharge would also be negatively affected. In view of the risks inherent in a 2°C warming scenario, African negotiators at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change had aimed for an ambitious global mitigation regime that kept the average global temperature rise below 1.5°C. Article 2 of the Paris Agreement as adopted called for warming to be kept well below 2°C, but conservative warming scenarios indicated that much of Africa could experience warming above 2°C by the end of the current century.

32. For Africa, the continent facing the most rapidly changing climatic conditions, the financial implications of such a rise were enormous, with climate change adaptation costs rising to \$50 billion per year by 2050, even if international efforts kept global warming below 2°C during the current century. Closing the adaptation finance gap was clearly a major challenge. In line with the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, issued at the fifteenth session of AMCEN, the aim of the African Group of Negotiators in Paris had been to achieve parity between adaptation and mitigation, including in the allocation of finances. Article 9 of the Paris Agreement captured the obligation of developed countries to continue to provide financing to developing countries for their mitigation and adaptation efforts, with developing countries encouraged to provide that support on a voluntary basis. The financing provisions of the Paris Agreement were not very specific, however, and there was no clear internationally agreed definition of what counted as climate financing or of the methodologies that might be used to measure it. Given that the adaptation funding gap was projected to rise rapidly in the face of a 2°C temperature rise and much more so given a 4°C rise, rapidly scaling up international funding to levels far above current levels was critical, with implications for policy priorities and positioning at the national, regional and international levels. Innovative solutions were clearly required to combat climate change and yield benefits that gave rise to sustainable, socially inclusive growth. Africa had taken a proactive lead by launching two initiatives – the Africa Adaptation Initiative to leverage adaptation opportunities and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative to leverage mitigation opportunities. Under the former, for example, measures were proposed to optimize the agricultural sector in Africa through ecosystem-based adaptation approaches. In conclusion, he said that Africa's climate change priorities had only been partly addressed in Paris and that AMCEN should further consider how Africa could benefit from the opportunities presented by climate change adaptation and mitigation.

33. Mr. Seyni Nafo, Chair of the African Group of Negotiators, gave a presentation on the outcomes of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which had taken place in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015, and their implications for Africa. The "Paris Package", as the outcomes were termed, comprised a legally binding agreement and accompanying decisions on climate change measures, the launch of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, and financial pledges to achieve the intended objectives. The package had been agreed upon in an inclusive and transparent process that reflected most of the priorities of Africa. The contribution of the African continent to the process had been very active and well coordinated, and there had been clear articulation of Africa's priorities – enhanced implementation of the Convention, balance in the treatment of adaptation and mitigation, adequate support for developing countries post-2020, negotiation of an ambitious and effective agreement, and priority and flexibility for Africa. Regarding entry into force of the Paris Agreement, considerable momentum had already been achieved prior to the official signature ceremony on 22 April 2016 in New York, with 169 countries already confirming their participation in the ceremony, and it was possible that the Agreement would enter into force before 2020.

34. With regard to adaptation, the session participants had taken into account the findings presented in the *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report, which showed that the cost of adaptation in the continent was likely to be between \$7 billion and \$15 billion annually by 2020. Early and ambitious action, however, would reduce the costs of future adaptation. Article 7 of the Paris Agreement aimed to enhance adaptation, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability and recognized that a global response to the adaptation challenge was vital to achievement of the global temperature goal in Article 2. A technical examination process on adaptation had been launched, proposing a range of measures and initiatives that could strengthen cooperative action for adaptation and facilitate the mobilization of support for adaptation in developing countries in the context of the global temperature goal. Article 2 recognized that the linkage between the temperature and the financial needs of developing countries would aid understanding of the financing trajectories over time, although care needed to be taken to ensure that such an approach did not place limits on economic development linked to the use of fossil fuels. Article 9 placed a general obligation on developed countries to take the lead in the mobilization of resources. Finally, he outlined the priorities of the African Group of Negotiators for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, which included the provision of adequate financing and other resources to translate intended nationally determined contributions into fundable strategies for accelerating implementation; mobilization of further financial support from developed countries for adaptation action in the pre-2020 period; enhanced access to the Green Climate Fund for developing countries; measures to ensure the sustainability and adequacy of the Adaptation Fund; full involvement of the African Group of Negotiators in the capacity-building initiative on transparency; and adequate support for the African initiatives on adaptation and renewable energy.

35. In the ensuing discussion, general appreciation was expressed for the role of the African negotiators in achieving most of the priorities for Africa, and for the leadership and continuing guidance of AMCEN and the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), both under Egypt's presidency and coordination, and the African Union. A number of representatives praised the progress achieved in Paris in comparison with previous rounds of climate negotiations leading up to those in Copenhagen. There were calls for Africa to continue to be a driving force in the process.
36. A number of representatives said that with the likelihood of all countries ratifying the Paris Agreement in New York on 22 April 2016, Africa should be prepared to move swiftly to the next stage, saying that rapid ratification and implementation of the agreement were crucial to moving towards implementation and striving for the 1.5°C limit in global warming, with many citing examples from their own countries of the effects of climate change already causing losses and damage. A number of representatives urged rapid implementation, with one saying that countries should be proactive in order to benefit from mechanisms and processes established by the Paris Agreement and that AMCEN and other partners should facilitate collaboration and the sharing of lessons. She noted, for example, that her country was undertaking multi-stakeholder engagement and preparations for the signing, ratification and national implementation of the agreement and called on all African countries to take steps to ratify it.
37. Many representatives raised the issue of financing, both for implementation of the agreement and for adaptation, with a number saying that it was necessary to mobilize funding from both international and domestic sources. One representative cautioned that although the Paris Agreement was universal and binding, the provisions for increased climate financing were unclear, and it remained to be seen whether developed countries honoured their commitments. Another said that Africa needed to maximize the benefits from the mechanisms and processes established under the agreement, including the financial mechanisms. One representative said that it was important to increase available funds, but even more important to make sure those funds were accessible. He noted, for example, that GEF funding had hitherto been accessed through third parties and proposed the creation of a window for direct access. Another recalled that under the Kyoto Protocol, there had been provision for a fund for adaptation, especially for least developed countries, and she proposed a similar fund under the Paris Agreement to strengthen the adaptation capacities of African countries.
38. Several representatives drew attention to the importance of various aspects of capacity-building and the need to mobilize the human resources of African countries to achieve implementation of the Paris Agreement. A number of representatives called for unity and for African countries to work together; there were calls for Africa to have one plan and one budget for implementation of the agreement. Others called for permanent units or teams at the continental level, under the auspices of AMCEN or the African Union, to advise African countries on the way forward.
39. One representative identified four key steps needed to ensure that Africa did not miss out on the climate revolution: to mobilize domestic financial resources to ensure continuous sustainable development and economic growth; to capitalize on human resources to meet the challenges facing African populations; research and appropriate technology for the continent; and national development programmes incorporating environmental and sustainable development elements with key indicators to measure progress achieved. Other suggestions included the development of regional road maps for implementation of the Paris Agreement; emphasis on South-South cooperation; transboundary cooperation; and the need for mechanisms to monitor implementation of the agreement under the auspices of AMCEN. One representative urged all African countries to join the Great Green Wall initiative and to discover the actions on 17 Sustainable Development Goals that the initiative targeted.
40. A number of representatives said that they looked forward to the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties and expressed appreciation to the Government of Morocco for offering to host it.
41. A number of representatives welcomed the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Africa Adaptation Initiative. Some mentioned examples of other initiatives in their countries, such as Sudan's initiative on dry lands. Partners were urged to avail resources for new initiatives, such as through mobilizing South-South cooperation. New partnerships were needed to ensure effective coordination of initiatives and a proposal was made to appoint an African ambassador to that end.
42. A number of representatives spoke of their countries' efforts and steps already taken towards implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the fulfilment of obligations under the Convention such as the timely submission of intended nationally determined contributions and the finalization of national policies and measures. One representative said that an effective and efficient governance framework was needed that was conducive to climate investment by the private sector, noting that her

country had put in place a national policy, legal and institutional framework for an effective response to climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

43. One representative said that the position of Executive Secretary of the Framework Convention would become vacant in the course of 2016 and urged that a decision be taken to support an African candidate for the post.

44. One representative said that for the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement it was essential to achieve peace and security in all countries on the continent. Issues such as food security could not be dealt with while instability and terrorism prevailed in some areas. Government policies had to be aimed at improving peace in the region.

45. Mr. Nafu thanked the representatives for their contributions and took note of the suggestions and strategies that had been made.

VII. Latest developments and the way forward for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the Africa Adaptation Initiative

A. Africa Renewable Energy Initiative

46. Mr. Youba Sokona, Mali, Head of the Interim Delivery Unit, Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, gave a presentation on the Initiative, saying that it was African-owned and African-led, oriented towards sustainable development and concerned with adaptation and mitigation. The goal of the Initiative was enhanced access to energy, which would be conducive to human development, prosperous economic development and job creation.

47. Saying that the Initiative could result in 10 gigawatts of new and additional renewable energy generation capacity by 2020 and mobilize the African potential to generate at least 300 gigawatts by 2030, he briefly outlined its guiding principles, which were to contribute to sustainable development in Africa; to benefit all African countries; to boost intra-regional and international cooperation; and to promote renewable energy technologies of all kinds, in addition to the full range of renewable electricity applications.

48. He also gave an overview of the activities that would be conducted as part of the Initiative, which were stocktaking and coordinating; the strengthening of existing policies by means of a regulatory framework; capacity-building and mobilization; securing of investment, on the one hand, and funds to cover operational costs, on the other; and project development and support.

49. He said that the cross-cutting objectives of the Initiative were to conduct a socioeconomic and environmental technology assessment, to stimulate multi-stakeholder engagement, to monitor the wider context with regard to renewable energy and to improve communication and outreach. The new technology resulting from the Initiative would be developed at least partly in Africa.

50. The Initiative was in the process of being fully established. The first part of the implementation phase would cover the period from 2016 to 2020, while the second part would run from 2020 to 2030.

51. In response to a question about the time frame for the submission of national project proposals, he said that proposals could already be sent to the AMCEN secretariat. Mr. Fahmy added that an interim delivery unit was being set up with the cooperation of the African Development Bank and the African Union. It was hoped that the board of directors of the unit would meet soon to discuss contentious issues and other matters of interest and that it would be possible to present a tentative list of projects at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

B. The Africa Adaptation Initiative

52. Introducing the sub-item, Ms. Kulthoum Omari (Botswana), Coordinator for the Africa Adaptation Initiative of the African Group of Negotiators, gave a presentation highlighting the background to and motives for the development of the Initiative, which, she said, was African-led and designed to scale up adaptation activities. The main pillars of the Initiative were based on four thematic areas aimed at enhancing climate information services; strengthening relevant institutional and policy frameworks; facilitating the implementation of concrete action on adaptation and approaches to addressing loss and damage on the ground; and increasing investment and financial flows to meet Africa's needs for adaptation and for addressing loss and damage.

53. She reported that members of the technical working group formed at the behest of the Assembly of the African Union to work on the operationalization and implementation of the Initiative had met for the first time from 14 to 16 April 2016 and that their discussions had led to the drafting of a report on Africa's adaptation gap.

54. In the build-up to the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, a work plan had been drawn up. It was hoped that, prior to that session, technical work would be finalized, a delivery model would be considered, the pillars of the Initiative would be translated into fundable projects and both a resource mobilization strategy and a communication outreach strategy would be developed.

VIII. Africa's engagement in the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

55. Ms. Rosemary Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies of UNEP, provided an overview of the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. She described the programme for the session as ambitious, aimed at positioning the Environment Assembly and UNEP to play key roles in addressing the challenges ahead, including with regard to emerging environmental issues.

56. The session was structured to generate innovative solutions by providing opportunities for extensive dialogue among stakeholders, both within and outside the conference room. Activities in the days leading up to the meeting included a science policy forum on 19 and 20 May 2016, the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on 21 and 22 May 2016, and the International Day of Biodiversity celebrations on 22 May 2016. Regional preparatory meetings would also be held on 21 and 22 May 2016, including consultations between the Executive Director of UNEP and regional groups. Twenty-seven side events were planned in parallel with the session, along with a three-day Sustainable Innovation Expo.

57. The proceedings of the Environment Assembly themselves would comprise meetings of the committee of the whole from 23 to 25 May 2016, at which the committee would discuss policy, budgetary and administrative issues and prepare draft resolutions, and a high-level segment on 26 and 27 May 2016. Under the overarching theme of "delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", the high-level segment would feature an interactive ministerial policy review session on "healthy environment, healthy people", a multi-stakeholder dialogue on "restoring and sustaining healthy ecosystems for people and planet: partnerships to jointly deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda", and high-level symposia on "mobilizing resources for sustainable development" and "environment and displacement: root causes and implications".

58. Africa, she said, was uniquely positioned to promote sustainable development, and AMCEN would help to ensure that Africa played a coordinated, active role at the second session of the Environment Assembly.

59. Mr. Kelebert Nkomani, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to Kenya, offered some remarks in his capacity as dean of the African diplomatic corps in Kenya. He began by observing that 2015 had been a remarkable year, with the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster and Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Nevertheless, much work remained to implement those agreements. The second session of the Environment Assembly would be a platform for demonstrating commitment to the environmental agenda. The AMCEN expert group had recommended a concise, negotiated outcome for the session's high-level segment that would provide clear political guidance on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that stressed the importance of integrated, balanced treatment of the three dimensions of sustainable development, the significance of the Rio principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and the need for adequate means of implementation.

60. Work was ongoing on the resolutions for the session, including several resolutions tabled or co-sponsored by African countries. Mr. Nkomani urged all the representatives to review the draft resolutions in depth once they were ready and thus to be prepared for informed contributions and decisions that truly reflected Africa's interests and aspirations. The work of the session should also include setting a time frame for implementation of the General Assembly resolution calling for the consolidation of UNEP headquarters functions in Nairobi and a conclusion on the UNEP stakeholder engagement policy.

61. An important issue still to be decided by Africa was its representation on the bureau of the Environment Assembly. As Chair of the African group, Mr. Nkomani had received nominations from the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Sudan, but he noted that the formal nomination process was still under way. He took the opportunity to thank the outgoing representatives of Egypt and Kenya for their diligent work.

62. He closed his remarks by thanking the UNEP secretariat for supporting the work of the African diplomatic corps in Nairobi on environment-related matters and urging countries that did not yet have missions in Nairobi to consider establishing them, and countries that already had missions to ensure that they were adequately staffed, so that environmental issues, which were often technical, could be properly handled.

IX. Other matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

A. Implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora

63. Ms. Leah Wanambwa, African Union Commission, gave a presentation on the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, which aimed to prevent, reduce and eventually eliminate illegal trade in wild flora and fauna through a coordinated response by all countries. She recalled that by decision EX.CL/Dec.832 (XXV), the Executive Council of the African Union, at its twenty-fifth ordinary session, in Malabo in June 2014, had requested relevant organizations to prepare an African common strategy on combating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora. Pursuant to the same decision, a conference on illegal trade in and exploitation of wild flora and fauna in Africa had been convened in Brazzaville in April 2015, at which participants had highlighted the economic, security, social and environmental implications of illegal trade; made significant progress in developing the African common strategy; and issued the Brazzaville Declaration, calling on the African Union and its member States to act together to fight illegal trade in wild fauna and flora. At its twenty-seventh ordinary session, in June 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Executive Council of the African Union, by decision EX.CL/Dec.879 (XXVII), had endorsed the African common strategy and the Brazzaville Declaration and had called on member States and African Union partners to support the common strategy and facilitate implementation of the action plan. In addition, the participants at a consultative meeting convened by the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa on 22 and 23 March 2016 had developed a coordination mechanism and plan for the implementation of the strategy during the period 2016–2017 through multilateral stakeholder engagement. In the next steps, member States would identify focal points and submit their names to the experts group to be established under the mechanism; an implementation matrix and plan of action would be circulated to member States for their review; and regional workshops on the strategy would be convened.

64. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives highlighted the importance of the issue of illegal trade in wild fauna and flora to Africa, as well as the considerable negative consequences for investment in national parks and tourism, national revenue and sustainable development. Some drew attention to the damage caused by poaching to populations of such flagship species as elephants and rhinos. Several representatives outlined legislative and policy measures that had been undertaken in their countries to combat illegal trade. Several representatives placed the matter in the context of the value of natural capital to the continent, and the importance of ensuring its sustainable use. Some representatives differentiated between, on the one hand, sustainable exploitation of natural capital, including wild fauna and flora, as a means of sustaining local livelihoods and benefiting communities and, on the other hand, illegal poaching, often through the activities of international organized crime syndicates, which devastated stocks of flora and fauna to the detriment of local and national economies and societies.

65. Several representatives stressed the importance of combating illegal trade in wildlife through international collaboration and cooperation involving national authorities, the African Union, United Nations organizations and other entities. One representative said that, given the international nature of illegal trade in wildlife, particular efforts should be made to involve neighbouring countries and demand countries in mitigation efforts. One representative said that effective action required multi-stakeholder, multisectoral action at the national level, including by the police, customs authorities, the judiciary, environmental agencies and civil society, in view of the complexity of the issue. One representative said that an effective response involved a holistic, integrated management approach, including long-term sustainability measures, with national measures aligned with international measures under the African common strategy. Some representatives said that it was

important to engage local communities and actors in conservation efforts and to ensure that they reaped the benefits from that engagement and became willing partners in conservation. One representative said that people lay at the heart of natural resource management and that unless local communities saw tangible benefits from resource management they would remain vulnerable to exploitation.

66. One representative said that annual reporting by member States to AMCEN and the African Union would help to coordinate efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife and expressed support for the appointment of a United Nations special envoy on wildlife crime. Another representative called for further engagement on the African common strategy at the next session of AMCEN, as well as further efforts to refine the process currently under way with regard to implementation measures and development of a road map with clear objectives and a specific time frame. He highlighted the issue of stockpiles of ivory and rhino horn, saying that there was a need for clear international guidelines on their management and disposal. One representative said that countries should have flexibility in managing their own stocks of wildlife and that efforts to discourage trophy hunting, for example through airline bans on the transport of wildlife trophies, were misguided because sustainably managed trophy hunting benefited local economies, giving them a stake in conservation.

B. Implementation of the regional flagship programmes

67. The representative of the secretariat outlined the background and status of the AMCEN regional flagship programmes. He recalled that AMCEN, at its fourteenth session, in September 2012 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, had adopted a decision to develop and implement regional flagship programmes to address a number of environmental and sustainable development issues in the context of the outcomes of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. At its fifth special session, in Gaborone in October 2013, AMCEN had established a steering committee within the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to guide the development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes and had endorsed concept notes for the five programmes. Since then a number of activities had been undertaken with regard to implementation of the regional flagship programmes, including a mapping and detailed assessment of relevant programmes already taking place at the regional level in Africa, in order to avoid duplication of existing activities. The NEPAD Agency had also conducted an assessment of activities at the national level, working with ministries of the environment and AMCEN focal points. In addition, at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the NEPAD Agency and AMCEN had held a side event to raise awareness of the regional flagship programmes and possible linkages with other activities in the region, including the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative. The steering committee was also working on a resource mobilization strategy in order to identify appropriate financing mechanisms for the regional flagship programmes at the regional and national levels, and a consultant had been engaged to assist in its finalization. The NEPAD Agency planned to hold a meeting of the steering committee to assess – in conjunction with member States, the private sector, civil society and other development partners – the current status of implementation of the regional flagship programmes and to discuss how their implementation could be accelerated.

68. He also summarized the main outcomes of the discussion on the matter during the expert group segment of the current session, during which concern had been expressed at the slow rate of implementation of the regional flagship programmes. Queries had been raised as to whether the NEPAD Agency was sufficiently resourced and supported to carry out its role as coordinator of the regional flagship programmes; whether the international institutions aligned with the programmes to support resource mobilization had functioned as planned; and whether adequate national arrangements had been put in place to ensure implementation of the programmes at the national level. Reconsideration of the architecture for the implementation of the regional flagship programmes had been proposed, both at the overall coordination level and at the national level, to assess whether the arrangements proposed at the Arusha meeting in 2012 were functioning as envisaged. In conclusion, he said that a meeting of the steering committee was planned for later in 2016, at which it would consider how to accelerate the implementation of the regional flagship programmes.

C. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment

69. Introducing the sub-item, Mr. Fahmy outlined the process by which AMCEN had been vested with its present mandate, as described in the annotations to the provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS/VI/1/Add.1), saying that the long-term status of AMCEN must be clarified in view of the differing interpretations of the related decision adopted by the African Union Assembly in Malabo

in June 2014 (Assembly/AU/Dec.526 (XXIII)), which had featured in the discussions recently held on the matter by the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, under which AMCEN fell. In that context, he noted that the Specialized Technical Committee met at the ministerial and expert level only every two years and had no subcommittees, working groups or other operational arms. In the event that AMCEN was abolished, it was therefore difficult to envisage how the Committee would perform any supervisory role, which was especially critical at the present juncture in the light of the commitments made to the implementation of the new global agenda.

70. He consequently proposed that AMCEN should draft a decision for transmission to the African Union requesting that the issue be discussed at its next Assembly, in July 2016, with an emphasis on the fact that the financial considerations underlying the Union's earlier related decision to abolish all sectoral ministerial conferences (Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII)) did not apply to AMCEN insofar as its activities were primarily self-funded. He expressed the view that AMCEN should continue to operate in its present form and discharge its mandate by working in close coordination with the Committee, while also stressing that AMCEN would fully respect whatever decision the African Union Assembly might take.

71. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives underlined the need to respect African Union decisions, with one agreeing that cost considerations, for the reasons mentioned, should not enter into any decision relating to the dismantling of AMCEN. She said that it would be relevant to ascertain, however, whether the Assembly of the African Union had in fact acted on the request set out in decision 14/6, adopted at the fourteenth regular session of AMCEN in 2012, that it reconsider its decision to abolish the sectoral ministerial conferences, specifically the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and, if so, what the outcome had been. She also suggested that AMCEN covered so many cross-cutting environmental issues that it could in fact stand as a specialized technical committee in its own right.

72. One representative remarked that the AMCEN mandate relating to climate change was surely set to continue in view of the ongoing nature of the global negotiations on that subject, whereas its mandate in various other spheres was likely to be reduced as a result of the establishment of bodies dealing specifically with such issues as water, disaster risk reduction and flora and fauna. He suggested that members should agree on the issues that AMCEN could realistically cover in the future and develop guidance accordingly with the aim of assisting the decision of the African Union Assembly on the matter. One representative said that AMCEN should develop a common position on the matter and another received support for his suggestion that robust information on AMCEN achievements and future potential should also be compiled for that same reason. He also said that the African Union Assembly decision to abolish sectoral ministerial conferences had not been motivated by financial considerations but by the efficiency and effectiveness of such conferences in their performance. One representative agreed that performance would constitute a factor in the African Union decision as to the future status of AMCEN, adding that the issues addressed by AMCEN had changed since its inception but its role had remained just as critical and indeed unique. He joined other representatives in endorsing the view expressed by one representative that AMCEN had proved its worth as a powerful voice for Africa in global negotiations; it was an inclusive and unifying platform and should continue in its current form. Others agreed that AMCEN as it now stood was best placed to address the wide range of cross-cutting environmental challenges and objectives, which were a top priority. Its track record spoke for itself, said one, who added that African financial support could help AMCEN to achieve even more.

73. Responding to the discussion, Mr. Fahmy first noted that environment ministers coordinated with other relevant ministries at the domestic level and represented their countries on environmental issues at the AMCEN level. In short, AMCEN served to unite Africans on those issues at the regional or global level.

74. Taking into account the comments made, he reiterated his proposal that a draft decision should be prepared requesting that the future status of AMCEN be considered at the next African Union Assembly, in July 2016. The text, he said, should emphasize full respect for the decision eventually taken in that regard by the Assembly; the view of members that AMCEN should retain its existing status in the light of the many challenges lying on the horizon; the need, in that event, for a coordination mechanism between AMCEN and the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment; and the absence of any financial burden on the African Union, if the Assembly were to decide that AMCEN should continue to function in its present role. He further proposed that the UNEP secretariat be requested to prepare an accompanying report setting out the past achievements and the future challenges of AMCEN and justifying its existence. Participants agreed with those two proposals.

75. Ms. Peace Tumusiime, also responding to the discussion, noted the long-standing interlinkages between issues ranging from water and desertification to climate change and biodiversity, among others. She said that the African Union fully recognized and appreciated the work carried out by AMCEN, adding that its achievements were not in doubt and observing that credible arguments in favour of its current status had been articulated. With a view to determining the right way forward, she suggested that Mr. Fahmy should serve in his capacity as President of AMCEN as a member of the Bureau of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

76. One representative welcomed the road map described by the Vice Minister in Charge of the Environment of Morocco in the context of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, adding that his country stood ready to join in working on such implementation initiatives. Calling for action to secure the resources needed for implementation of the African Adaptation Initiative, which he saw as bringing particular benefit to the continent's least developed countries, and for the establishment of an African institution-building mechanism, he said that he looked forward to the Conference of the Parties as an opportunity for the conclusion of relevant projects and programmes formulated on the basis of national interests and priorities.

77. In reply to a question about the procedure for accessing GEF funding for capacity-building and resilience-building initiatives, Ms. Ishii explained that such funding and the selection of relevant implementing agencies had always been determined on the basis of a business model that was currently under review by the GEF Council. Saying that the outcome of that review was expected in the near future, she added that the conclusion drawn from country visits and other available information was that not all of those agencies necessarily represented the best interests of countries and that GEF funding was modest and fragmented. She therefore suggested that ministries should exercise full control over any allocated funding and ensure that agencies worked in their best interests. GEF was furthermore in dialogue with national authorities about ways of making the best strategic use of such modest amounts of funding, including in the area of capacity-building, in order to achieve optimum results and avoid the fragmentation of already limited resources. All would depend, however, on the outcome of the business model review.

X. Consideration of the draft declaration and draft decisions

78. In a closed session, the ministers and other high-level participants considered the 2016 AMCEN special session Cairo Declaration.

79. They then considered the six draft decisions that had been discussed during the expert segment, adopting draft decisions SSVI/1, on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063; SSVI/2, on Africa's engagement in the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; SSVI/3, on matters related to biodiversity: the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; SSVI/4, on action for combating desertification, drought, floods and restoring degraded land to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world; SSVI/5, on climate change and Africa's preparation for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and SSVI/6, on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

XI. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment

80. On the afternoon of Tuesday, 19 April 2016, the Conference adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report that had been circulated at the meeting (AMCEN/SS/VI/L.1) on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be entrusted to the secretariat, working in conjunction with the Rapporteur.

XII. Other matters

81. The representative of UNEP gave a presentation on the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in particular the arrangements for the high-level segment. She also provided an update on the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, including the status of ratification of the Convention; the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in Bamako from 24 to 26 June 2013; and notification of a meeting that would be held in Nairobi

immediately following the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, at which plans for the second session of the Conference of the Parties and possible secretariat arrangements for the Convention would be discussed. Finally, she provided information on the status of ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, noting the prominence of African countries among those that had thus far ratified the Convention and encouraging more to do so in the lead-up to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which was expected to take place in Geneva in 2017.

XIII. Closure of the meeting

82. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was declared closed at 7.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 19 April 2016.

Annex I

Cairo Declaration

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the Cairo Declaration on managing Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication, adopted in 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Acknowledging that the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa is a vehicle for valuation and accounting of natural capital that can contribute positively to the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Taking note of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development for Africa, adopted at the twenty-fourth session of the African Union Assembly, held on 30 and 31 January 2015 in Addis Ababa, and its first 10-year implementation plan, covering the period 2014–2023,

Welcoming the decision of the African Union Assembly on the post-2015 development agenda,¹ adopted at its twenty-sixth session, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2016,

Welcoming also the decision of the Executive Council² on the Mek'ele Ministerial Retreat of the Executive Council especially on Agenda 2063 flagship projects to fast-track development of the proposals to catalyse implementation of Agenda 2063 and facilitate integration,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 adopting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling also the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015,

Recognizing the convergence between Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the work done by the African Union Commission to embed the Sustainable Development Goals in the Agenda 2063 10-year implementation plan, and in its results and monitoring and evaluation framework,

Recalling the outcome document and resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its first session, held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 June 2014,

Welcoming the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016 under the overarching theme of "Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Reaffirming our commitment to the full implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", and all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and specifically the implementation of section IV.C of the Rio+20 outcome document, on the environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development, as well as paragraph 88 on strengthening and upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme,

Emphasizing the need to strengthen the United Nations Environment Programme's strategic regional presence on the continent in order to provide the requisite leadership and support to Member States, ensure implementation of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and enhance the Programme's capacity to support the implementation of national- and regional-level programmes and projects that address various environmental challenges,

Affirming the centrality of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Africa's deliberations to address the environmental dimension of Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the United Nations Environment Assembly, major groups and civil society, as well as its effectiveness in providing guidance to African nations,

¹ Assembly/AU/Dec.600(XXVI).

² EX.CL/Dec.908(XXVIII).

Recalling the outcome of the second Africa Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Conference, which provided a platform for continental dialogue on food security and climate change adaptation and formed the African Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly as a pan-African policy framework and implementation platform that brings together stakeholders along the entire ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agriculture value chain towards the attainment of climate resilience, food security, access to clean energy, ecological productivity, job creation, poverty reduction and value addition in Africa,

Stressing that conservation and protection of wild flora and fauna can lead to accelerated economic growth, enhance security and ensure sustainable development, which will lead to attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

Recognizing that robust accountability mechanisms are critical for achieving complete elimination of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna in Africa,

Recognizing also the detrimental impacts of illegal trade in wild fauna and flora at the domestic and international levels, and expressing concern that the overexploitation of Africa's wild fauna and flora and the dramatic escalation of illegal trade in these species in recent years are threatening the rich array of biodiversity in the region,

Welcoming the development of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora and its adoption by the African Union Executive Council in Johannesburg in June 2015,

Acknowledging that the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 September to 5 October 2016, and the need for a regional process to prepare an African common position for the conference to ensure delivery of outcomes favourable to Africa,

Acknowledging also that drought is a natural phenomenon that has caused human suffering since the beginning of humanity, and is being aggravated as a result of climate change,

Observing that drought has major implications in terms of loss of human lives and food security, degradation of natural resources, negative consequences for fauna and flora, poverty and social unrest, and that short-term and long-term losses in a number of economic sectors are increasing,

Recalling the mandate given by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to member States' negotiators of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer for the establishment of a contact group in 2015 to negotiate and reach an agreement on an amendment on hydrofluorocarbons, and appreciating the role of the African negotiators in the adoption of the Dubai Pathway on hydrofluorocarbons in November 2015,

Recalling also decision SS.V/3 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on the processes towards development and implementation of a resource mobilization strategy for the regional flagship programmes,

Declare:

1. To recognize the political guidance provided by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to the African negotiators representing Africa in various multilateral forums on the environment and sustainable development, and to stress the indispensable role played by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in shaping and formulating African common positions on matters related to the environment and sustainable development, including, among others, the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, climate change, biodiversity, chemicals and waste management, the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly and various multilateral environmental agreements;

On implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

2. To agree to put in place strategies for sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital, including instituting appropriate policies and practices for reversing ecosystem degradation and promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns;

3. To agree to cooperate in strengthening regional and national capacity for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated manner;

4. To agree to strengthen existing regional institutional mechanisms in Africa for ecosystem-based management of oceans and coastal zones and, in this regard, call on the United Nations Environment Programme and partners within their respective mandates to organize as appropriate a conference on oceans in 2017;
5. To express appreciation for progress made under the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa in pursuing sustainable development and implementing the African Green Economy Partnership regional flagship programme, to take note of the Declaration's role in promoting and supporting optimal utilization and harnessing of the full potential of Africa's rich natural resource endowments, and to invite Member States in a position to do so to join the Gaborone Declaration with a view to promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
6. To call for the sustainable and optimal management of Africa's natural capital as a gateway to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan;
7. To express appreciation to the African Union for recognizing that sustainably harnessing natural capital and reversing environmental loss are critical for achieving Agenda 2063;
8. To agree to create and strengthen private and public partnerships and establish centres for sustainable harnessing of natural capital, value addition, green industries and agricultural processing;
9. To support the establishment of the Africa Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly, acknowledge its constitution and the outcomes of the process leading to the establishment of the Assembly as the inclusive pan-African policy framework and implementation platform that brings together key stakeholders and actors along the entire ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agriculture value chain;
10. To support Egypt's bid to host, in 2018, the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as a meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization;

On climate change

11. To express appreciation to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Development Bank for having convened a consultative meeting of the technical working group on the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative governance framework and other related issues in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 31 March and 1 April 2016, and to call for expediting the preparation of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative governance framework and related establishment documents in accordance with the relevant African Union decisions, and to take note, in this regard, of the offer by the African Union Commission to host a consultative meeting with the presidents of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Development Bank with a view to holding the first meeting of the governing board in July 2016;
12. To take note of the candidates nominated by African Governments for the position of Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, which will become vacant in July 2016;
13. To note that, since the establishment of the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, no individual from the African continent has held the position of Executive Secretary;
14. To call on the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint, after consultations with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, a nominee from the African continent to the position as a reflection of the urgency of addressing climate change;

On the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

15. To remind the United Nations Environment Assembly that, in General Assembly resolution 63/1, "Political declaration on Africa's development needs", the Member States affirmed their commitment to addressing the special needs of Africa, and that therefore the United Nations Environment Assembly should take this commitment into consideration in its deliberations;

16. To call on the United Nations Environment Assembly and the international community to turn the resolutions adopted at the second session of the Assembly and at previous sessions, including those of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council, into concrete actions;

17. To call on the United Nations Environment Assembly to fully integrate and mandate regional ministerial forums, such as the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, among others, as integral bodies of the United Nations Environment Assembly process in the regions;

18. To express appreciation for the work of the African Diplomatic Corps in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and elsewhere to support Member States in the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme, and to call on them to work tirelessly to achieve common African positions on issues of priority for Africa;

19. To call on those Member States that have not done so to establish diplomatic representation with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in Nairobi, given the critical role and importance of the two United Nations bodies as multilateral centres for Africa's engagement in the discussion of the global and regional sustainable development agenda;

20. To stress the need for the United Nations Environment Programme to expedite the important process of consolidating United Nations Environment Programme headquarters functions, as mentioned in paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome, and apprise Member States of progress;

21. To nominate Gabon and Nigeria as Africa's representatives to the bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session;

On biodiversity, desertification and other matters

22. To acknowledge the central role of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in addressing policy and technical issues of the environmental dimension of Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, as well as its effectiveness in providing guidance to African countries for the implementation of these frameworks;

23. To call on African countries to attend and actively participate in the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 September to 5 October 2016, and the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Cancun, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016, as well as the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held from 7 to 18 November 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco;

24. To agree to develop a common African position for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, in close collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners;

25. To call on African countries to support and actively participate in the 5 June 2016 World Environment Day activities to be hosted by Angola, with the focus on the fight against illegal trade in flora and fauna, and to reaffirm commitments, successes and challenges in the fight against this global problem;

26. To agree to develop a common approach on the management and disposal of African elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn stockpiles in line with the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and with due consideration of the costs and risks associated with safekeeping as well as the implications for communities' need to collaborate to secure stockpiles that are part of investigations in countries of origin;

27. To welcome the adoption of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora by the African Union Summit in June 2015 and call on Member States and regional and subregional organizations to take full ownership of the strategy and ensure its successful implementation;

28. To support the offer by Senegal to host the first regional conference for West African countries on illegal trade in wildlife, where the countries will focus on the sharing, dissemination and implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora and call on the African Union Commission, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme and all partners to support this initiative by Senegal;

29. To welcome the African drought conference being organized by Namibia, under the aegis of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, in Windhoek from 15 to 19 August 2016;
30. To urge Member States to use the experience, expertise and institutions referred to in the declaration on drought policy adopted at the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy held in Geneva in 2013 to share their data and policies on measures for the development of an African strategic framework for drought management and actions to enhance resilience to drought and develop early warning systems for African countries, and invite the World Meteorological Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to further support the development of this process;
31. To renew the mandate of the negotiators of Member States to continue to support the negotiations and examine the different solutions to challenges facing Africa in the implementation of an amendment on hydrofluorocarbons, including adequate financial and technological support through the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, with a view to reaching an agreement on such an amendment in 2016;
32. To support Rwanda in its hosting of the twenty-eighth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol which will be held in October 2016;
33. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to represent Africa and to present this declaration along with the decisions, key messages and other matters relating to the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to:
- (a) The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme;
 - (b) The African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment; and
 - (c) Other regional and global forums, institutions and partners;
34. To urge ministers responsible for the environment in Africa to report on this declaration and the outcomes of the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to their Heads of State and Government;
35. To pay tribute to the President of Egypt, His Excellency Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, and the Government and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants and the excellent facilities made available to them as well as for their generous support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its sixth special session, which contributed greatly to its success;
- On a special tribute to the former executive director of UNEP, Dr. Mostafa Kamal Tolba*
36. To note with deep sympathy the recent passing away of Dr. Mostafa Kamal Tolba, the former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and to express appreciation for his role in establishing the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1985;
37. To recognize the strong foundation which Dr. Tolba laid in establishing environmental protection programmes under the United Nations Environment Programme as its Executive Director from 1975 to 1992;
38. To also recognize the key multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and similar regional environmental agreements, in whose negotiation and adoption Dr. Tolba played a significant role;
39. To further recognize the significant role played by Dr. Tolba in establishing the first-ever financial mechanism – the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol – dedicated to addressing a major environmental issue, the protection of the ozone layer;

40. To request that the President of the African Ministerial Conference convey to the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly the gratitude of the States Members of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the enormous contribution made by Dr. Tolba to the protection of the environment and sustainable development through his strong leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme;

41. To further request that this tribute be reflected in the records of the outcome of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Annex II

Decisions adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its sixth special session

A. Decision SS.VI/1: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063: the contribution of natural capital¹

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development for Africa, and its first 10-year implementation plan covering the period 2014–2023,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/1, on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling also the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which provided a broad framework for addressing the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development,

Welcoming the outcomes of the ninth joint annual meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa from 31 March to 2 April 2016,

Welcoming also, in accordance with African Ministerial Conference on the Environment decision SS.V/3, the processes towards the development and implementation of a resource mobilization strategy for the regional flagship programmes being developed,

Recalling decision 15/1 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital in the context of Agenda 2063, which recognized the urgent imperative to harness, sustainably manage and leverage Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and poverty reduction,

Noting the progress made under the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa in pursuing sustainable development and in implementing the African Green Economy Partnership regional flagship programme, and taking note of the Declaration's role in promoting and supporting the optimal utilization and harnessing of natural capital,

Recalling Principle 2 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which affirmed the sovereign right of countries, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies,

Aware of the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, scheduled to take place from 23 to 27 May 2016 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi with the overall theme of "Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Determined to sustainably and optimally manage the region's natural capital in order to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan,

Decide:

1. To agree that the African States shall cooperate among themselves to strengthen national capacity for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063;

¹ Natural capital is the environmental assets of a country. The main categories of natural capital are natural resource stocks, land and ecosystems.

2. To agree to take measures to invest in strengthening and developing institutional and governance mechanisms, processes and interventions for sustainable harnessing² of environmental assets and reversing natural capital losses as part of the contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063;
3. To agree to create and strengthen partnerships between Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the international community and other relevant parties to promote and enhance investments in natural capital value addition, sustainable/green industrialization and wealth creation;
4. To agree to advocate, create awareness of and mobilize the public as well as build capacity on integration of natural capital in the natural capital accounting systems as a gateway for contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063;
5. To call on regional and international institutions to support sustainable harnessing of natural capital and reversing of environmental losses by creating innovative financing mechanisms and to agree to facilitate the creation and strengthening of private and public partnerships on the continent to establish centres for sustainable harnessing of natural capital and value addition;
6. To agree to take ownership of the regional flagship programmes and cooperate in order to fast-track their implementation, which will improve the livelihoods of our society;
7. To call on the African Union to reaffirm that sustainable harnessing of natural capital and reversing environmental loss are critical for achieving the vision of Agenda 2063;
8. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, other United Nations agencies, development partners and the international community to facilitate the strengthening of international cooperation in undertaking studies and developing policies and measures that contribute to integrating environmental and natural resources in macroeconomic and sectoral policies, and for reversing environmental losses and sustainable harnessing of natural capital, including on capacity, development of tools and methodologies, innovative technology and sustainable financing and coordination among multilateral agreements related to finance, trade and environmental matters;
9. To call on all States Members of the United Nations Environment Assembly to consider adopting a universally applicable resolution on capturing the value of natural capital and the development of policies, plans and programmes during the Assembly's second session;
10. To agree to reflect this decision in national policies and legislation, especially on allocating a portion of current earnings from natural capital for reinvestment in sectors that are highly catalytic for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (especially clean energy and optimization of ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agricultural value chains and adding value to extractive activities);
11. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in consultation with members of the Bureau and other Member States, to present this decision and the key messages on natural capital in the annex to the decision to the following forums, with a follow-up report to the next ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment:
 - (a) The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme with the aim of galvanizing international support and bringing to the attention of the world the need to strengthen the natural capital gateway as a means of implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063;
 - (b) The African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment with the aim of having these outcomes endorsed at the next African Union Summit, in July 2016;
 - (c) Other regional and global forums, institutions and partners with the aim of drawing attention to the need to develop policies and programmes for sustainably harnessing natural capital and reversing environmental losses;
12. To urge ministers responsible for the environment in Africa to report on this decision and the other outcomes of the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to their respective Heads of State and Government.

² Harnessing natural capital is adding value to environmental assets in a sustainable manner.

Annex

Key messages

1. We, African ministers of the environment, recognize that Africa's natural capital underpins the continent's economy and that it will continue to represent a significant development opportunity for its people as a means of wealth creation.
2. We affirm that achieving long-term sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Africa will depend on the sustainable and optimal management and utilization of our natural capital.
3. We believe that using natural capital as a gateway will allow for action through financial, economic, social and environmental contributions towards the achievement of Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as unlocking domestic resources.
4. We recognize that by investing in harnessing natural capital, Africa could in the next 15 years progress in sustainably expanding its economies towards creating jobs, promoting resource efficiency, enhancing competitiveness and market access in achieving food security, combating climate change, enhancing the productivity of its ecosystems that underpin economic productivity, alleviating poverty and achieving a more inclusive society.
5. In the light of declining official development assistance to Africa and mounting development needs, we recognize the need for Africa to mobilize domestic resources to complement and leverage additional large-scale international sources for implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.
6. We recognize the importance of research and development as well as technological innovations in promoting sustainable development, and to that effect we emphasize strengthening of national capabilities for environmentally innovative technology.
7. We are committed to mobilizing domestic resources by instituting innovative strategies, mechanisms and interventions to sustainably harness Africa's natural capital. We therefore call on our Governments to use the natural capital gateway by investing in (a) reversing environmental losses so as to free resources for development, and (b) sustainable harnessing of natural capital and sustainable green industrialization, green agriculture, integrated sustainable urban development, green transport systems, ecotourism, sustainable trade through value addition and sustainable/green industrialization.
8. We will put in place strategies for sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital, including instituting appropriate policies and practices to reverse ecosystems degradation and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.
9. We will establish and strengthen policies and measures for safeguarding funds recovered from illicit financial flows arising out of the plundering of Africa's natural capital and will channel those funds back into our economies as part of the financing for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.
10. We will ensure prioritized allocation of current earnings from natural capital to catalytic natural-capital-based sectors, such as enhancing agricultural productivity and access to clean energy, which are capable of catalysing the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.
11. We will also ensure that our Governments allocate a percentage of earnings from the export of natural capital to sectors that will be highly catalytic in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.
12. We recognize that by investing in natural capital, Africa will be able to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15, among others, including through adding value to optimize revenue; reversing environmental loss and crime, resource plundering and illicit financial flows; and reprioritizing allocation of current natural capital earnings to catalytic highly potent sectors.

Reversing environmental loss

13. Africa loses an estimate of up to 195 billion United States dollars annually of its natural capital through illicit financial flows; plundering of resources; environmental crimes such as illegal logging, illegal trade in wildlife, illegal, unaccounted for and unregulated fishing; illegal mining practices; food imports, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; and degraded ecosystems. This amount exceeds the total annual amount Africa needs to invest in infrastructure, health care and education, and to combat climate change under a less-than-2°C warming scenario.

14. Building both the biophysical and social resilience of communities as well as enhancing the productivity of the very ecosystems that underpin economies and livelihoods can be effectively done through ecosystem-based adaptation approaches.

15. We recognize that reversing environmental losses could result in recouping of up to 195 billion dollars annually for reinvestment in these sectors with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. We believe that investing in catalytic natural-capital-based sectors such as clean energy and optimized ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agricultural value chains will catalyse the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

17. We believe that investing in better and sustainable management of environmental assets such as ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agriculture and clean energy will reduce costs and reverse losses from environmental degradation while at the same time creating wealth for our people and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. We believe that investment in capacity-building, financial engineering and technology to improve tax administration in countries will significantly reduce natural capital losses resulting from illicit financial flows.

19. We recognize that optimizing Africa's agriculture through sustainable agricultural approaches can enhance yields of more nutritious foods by up to 128 per cent and increase farmers' income, thereby decreasing environmental loss and financial costs.

20. We will use various methodologies and approaches to enhance the capacity of ecosystems that underpin productivity, while ensuring that the crucial ecosystem services such as water, soils, biodiversity and pollinators continue to be provided, thus guaranteeing long-term productivity.

21. We recognize that investing in ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agriculture will simultaneously guarantee sustainable yield increases of more nutritious food; enhance farmer-level incomes, ecosystems capacity and climate adaptation; and build the climate resilience of our local communities.

Value addition and sustainable industrialization

22. Value addition to natural capital, whether from extractive processes or ecosystem goods and services, contributes to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 through sustainable industrialization that creates jobs and wealth and improves human well-being.

23. We will enhance the productivity of the various natural capital and economic sectors by creating an enabling framework for value addition, including policies and programmes that harness the full potential of our natural capital so as to create wealth for our people.

24. We will create opportunities for the private sector to establish eco-entrepreneurship, add value and establish industries for sustainable harnessing of natural capital.

25. We will use the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa, as one of the mechanisms put in place by some African countries, to help value and manage natural capital and to sustainably improve the economic and social well-being of the citizens of the African continent.

26. Given Africa's abundant renewable energy sources and increasing global attention to clean energy investments, we will prioritize the expansion of accessible clean energy in rural areas with the specific objective of catalysing, for example, rural agro-industry, a derivative of the continent's natural capital.

27. We will strengthen investments in agro-processing in ecosystem-based-adaptation-driven agriculture to increase sustainable industrialization. By optimizing Africa's agricultural productivity through linking ecological on-farm production with commercial value chains, including accessible energy to catalyse agro-processing, value addition and enterprises along the entire agricultural value chain, Africa can create as many as 17 million jobs and catalyse an agricultural industry projected to be worth 1 trillion dollars by 2030.

Natural capital valuation³ and accounting⁴

28. We understand that knowing the value of our natural capital will help us determine how much the services provided by nature contribute to the economy and well-being of our people, which in turn will help us make better decisions about the constituents of sustainable development.

29. We are aware that many of our countries' development growth measurements such as accounting, economic performance and gross domestic product currently do not take into account valuation of our natural capital and its losses, thus showing an incomplete analytical framework. We will therefore take policy action to incorporate valuation of our natural capital into development planning and accounting, as this is a foundation of our wealth.

30. We are also aware that without full valuation of less-tangible benefits from natural capital, their exploitation will remain unsustainable and degradation inevitable. We will therefore promote concerted efforts to mainstream natural capital valuation and accounting, which are critical for integrating the values of natural capital into decision-making processes.

31. We will encourage the use of environmental policy as part of the standard economic stimulus package in addition to the more traditional fiscal and monetary policy.

32. We encourage relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other relevant institutions, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to provide further support to African countries in valuing and accounting for natural capital.

Governance and partnerships

33. We will take policy, institutional and legal measures and reforms to sustainably harness Africa's natural capital, add value, reverse current environmental losses and reinvest current earnings from natural capital at regional, national and local levels.

34. We will continue to mobilize policymakers, create awareness of the role of natural capital in the development process and build consensus at local, national and regional levels in Africa on the contribution of natural capital to sustainable development.

35. We will advocate for policy reviews and actions to integrate natural capital as a gateway for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication as well as financing implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

36. We will create and strengthen partnerships especially with the private sector, financial institutions, researchers and academia, and the international community in developing centres for natural capital harnessing and investing in processes and interventions that create value addition and wealth using our natural capital.

37. We will strengthen our governance mechanisms at local, national and regional levels for sustainably harnessing natural capital and reversing environmental loss and resource plundering through appropriate policies, processes and interventions.

Mobilizing global support

38. We call on the international community to support sustainable harnessing of Africa's natural capital through the strengthening of capacity, development of adaptable tools and methodologies and innovative technology transfer. Our priority is that technology transfer and support should target highly catalytic sectors capable of catalysing the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

39. We also call for international support in technology transfer and capacity-building to minimize illegal financial flows, especially through tax evasion prevention and improved tax administration.

40. We request creation of global and regional partnerships for technology transfer and capacity-building that can unlock opportunities for value addition such as in clean energy to power rural industries and provide alternatives to biomass, hence limiting forest degradation and enhancing the value of Africa's natural capital.

³ Natural capital valuation is a process used to assess or appreciate the worth of natural capital.

⁴ Accounting is understanding the full value of natural capital to the economy and well-being.

41. We request the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations agencies and programmes to support Africa especially by providing technical support and fostering international cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system in sustainable management of natural capital.

B. Decision SS.VI/2: Africa's engagement in the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want"; United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/213, on strengthening and upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme and establishing universal membership of its Governing Council; and General Assembly resolution 67/251, which changed the designation of the Governing Council to the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recalling also the outcome document of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, adopted in Nairobi in 2014,

Aware of the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which will take place in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016,

Mindful of the fact that the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are interdependent, interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that none can be implemented without the others,

Stressing that poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions, including the eradication of extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge for Africa and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

Aware that the dramatic illegal trade in wildlife and the overexploitation of African wild flora and fauna are depriving African nations of their natural capital and cultural heritage, thereby undermining the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication,

Aware also that natural capital, including forests, mountains, wetlands, oil, gas, minerals, land, water, fish and wildlife, when optimally harnessed, will significantly contribute to the implementation of Africa's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as poverty eradication in Africa, and noting that such a contribution will not be realized without the addition of value to Africa's natural capital and the halting of the continuing plundering of that natural capital, including illegal trade in wildlife and the continued illicit financial flows out of the continent,

Mindful of the relationship between the United Nations Environment Assembly and the functions of the United Nations General Assembly and its subsidiary organ the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as the United Nations Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organ the Committee for Programme and Coordination, insofar as review and approval of the programme of work, budget and medium-term strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme are concerned,

Appreciating the work of the African Diplomatic Corps as the permanent representatives of Member States in the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme,

Acknowledging the political guidance provided by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi and the negotiators representing Africa at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly,

Acknowledging also the centrality of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in deliberating on and addressing the environmental dimension of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, as well as its effectiveness in providing guidance to Africa and the United Nations Environment Assembly,

Decide:

1. To remind the United Nations Environment Assembly of General Assembly resolution 63/1, “Political declaration on Africa’s development needs,” which reaffirmed the commitment to addressing the special needs of Africa, including those mentioned in the present decision and its key messages, and to emphasize the need for the United Nations Environment Assembly to take this matter into account in its deliberations;
2. To emphasize the importance of the timely and effective implementation of all previous decisions and resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly as well as the Governing Council;
3. To agree to continue strengthening the linkages between the permanent representatives of Member States based at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi and United Nations Headquarters in New York for better collaboration so as to ensure a common understanding of and approaches to issues affecting the sustainable development agenda of the African region;
4. To encourage Member States that have not done so to establish diplomatic representation with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in Nairobi, given the critical role and importance of the two United Nations bodies as the multilateral centres for Africa’s engagement in the discussion of the global sustainable development agenda;
5. To nominate Gabon and Nigeria as Africa’s representatives to the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session;
6. To express appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Africa in anticipation of the Programme’s continued support to enable the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to continue playing its indispensable role in shaping and formulating African common positions on matters related to the work of the Programme, as well other matters related to the environment and sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, climate change, biodiversity, chemicals and waste management, and multilateral environment agreements;
7. To agree that the President and Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in collaboration with the permanent representatives based in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, should continue to coordinate the work of the African Group so as to ensure an effective and coordinated front during deliberations at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Annex**Key messages**

1. We call on the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to support the full implementation of resolutions adopted at the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and those that will be adopted at the Assembly’s second session, as well as the decisions of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council, especially as they relate to the priorities for Africa, to enable the region to benefit from the common but differentiated responsibility of nations.

Africa’s Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

2. We reaffirm the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan as well as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.
3. We reaffirm that capacity-building, technical and financial support to Africa are necessary for the achievement of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda on the continent.
4. We reaffirm the need to implement all three dimensions of sustainable development on an equal basis and without prejudice to any of them in order to fully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to eradicate poverty.
5. We further reaffirm that poverty eradication is central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa.

6. We emphasize that Africa is the only continent lagging behind in the implementation of internationally agreed commitments and that therefore it is necessary to translate those commitments into concrete actions.

Natural capital

7. We note that value addition and optimal harnessing and management of Africa's natural capital are prerequisites for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as they will create wealth and employment through sustainable/green industrialization, thereby, among other things, curbing illicit financial flows and reducing migration from Africa to other parts of the world.

8. We call for sustained development of African capacities relating to the blue growth/ocean economy, as defined in Agenda 2063, and in the context of achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication; invite African coastal States to enhance integration of the maritime dimension into national economic planning in accordance with their national legislation by developing smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth models for the oceans, seas and coastal areas, including water bodies, grounded in the knowledge that the blue growth/ocean economy can play an important role in the attainment of Agenda 2063.

9. We call on the international community, including relevant United Nations agencies, development partners and other relevant stakeholders including, among others, the private sector, to support African countries' efforts to optimally harness their natural capital for realization of Agenda 2063, its 10-year plan and the 2030 Agenda by providing capacity-building, technology transfer and financial assistance to African countries and innovative solutions for harnessing of and value addition to Africa's natural capital, as outlined in decision 15/1 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in order to eradicate poverty.

10. We call for strengthening of Africa's regional institutional mechanisms for ecosystem-based management of oceans and coastal zones and, in this regard, call on the United Nations Environment Programme and its partners, acting within their respective mandates, to organize, as appropriate, a conference on oceans in 2017.

Illegal exploitation of and trade in wild flora and fauna

11. We call on the international community to extend support to African countries in continuing the efforts to address challenges relating to illegal trade in wildlife, in particular as regards strengthening the implementation of Africa's common strategy and providing support.

12. We recognize the need to strengthen collaboration on and implementation of relevant regional initiatives such as the African Elephant Action Plan and other initiatives dealing with combating illegal trade in wildlife as well as bilateral and regional cooperation between African countries and relevant stakeholders.

13. We recognize the need for regional and subregional ownership of the African strategy for combating illegal exploitation of and illegal trading of flora and fauna and encourage Member States to host subregional meetings; and, in this regard, we support Senegal's initiative to host the first subregional meeting of West African countries.

UNEP and coordination among multilateral environmental agreements

14. We agree that in order to promote strong and coherent environmental governance, Member States need to coordinate among themselves on the governance and United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions and those of multilateral environmental agreements, so that the work of the Assembly and that of the conferences and meetings of the parties to agreements are well coordinated and mutually supportive.

Changes in the cycle of United Nations Environment Assembly sessions

15. We emphasize the importance of reviewing the biennial cycle of the United Nations Environment Assembly to hold its regular sessions in odd years in order to align it with United Nations programmes, processes and budgeting mechanisms.

16. We note that the revised cycle will also apply to the open-ended meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, in accordance with United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council decision 27/2.

17. We also note that the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly should take place during the second half of 2017 for a period of four days; should include a high-level segment, as specified in Governing Council decision 27/2; and should be preceded by a four-day

preparatory meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held at least three months before the convening of the Assembly.

Outcome document of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

18. We reaffirm the importance of concluding the work of the high-level segment of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly with an outcome document in the form of a negotiated political declaration based on consensus. This outcome document should be concise and based on principles of sustainable development, including common but differentiated responsibilities, consolidation of the headquarters functions of the United Nations Environment Programme, reflecting the priorities and key interests of the African continent, achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication, conserving Africa's natural capital, and providing means of implementation, capacity-building, technology transfer and financial support. The outcome document should also focus on the overarching theme of the session, outlining the commitment of Member States to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, including its environmental dimension

19. We stress that achieving a negotiated outcome for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly is of crucial importance, especially in view of the adoption of ground-breaking and historic international instruments such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change, among others.

20. We further stress that a negotiated outcome provides experts and ministers a platform for articulating and actively drafting contents in an open and transparent manner, and also encourages ownership of the outcome by all Member States, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities.

Stakeholder participation

21. We acknowledge the role of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the promotion of sustainable development. We therefore call on Member States to finalize the United Nations Environment Programme stakeholder engagement policy on the basis of the proposal presented by the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Until the adoption of the policy, we affirm our commitment to inclusive and meaningful participation by all accredited relevant stakeholders in the United Nations Environment Assembly and its preparatory process in a way that maintains the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Assembly. Such accreditation shall be based on precise criteria and consultation with all Member States.

The United Nations Environment Assembly in the regions

22. We, African ministers of the environment, recognize the critical role that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment has played in the more than 30 years since its establishment in Cairo in 1985, especially in facilitating consensus-building, enhancing Africa's effective participation in global and regional dialogue, and coordinating policy and actions for achievement of the continent's environmental and sustainable development interests. We are convinced that regional ministerial forums, particularly the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, among others, should have a clear mandate and role in the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in view of the evolving and complex nature of environmental issues, especially in relation to developing countries.

23. We believe that the mandate of the strengthened regional ministerial environment forums should focus on, among other things, promoting linkages between global, regional and national environment agendas, as well as enhancing interregional cooperation to address the environmental challenges facing the world.

24. We reiterate our call for the United Nations Environment Programme to increase its regional presence through the establishment of regional programmes that bring unified delivery of programmes in the regions.

25. We reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", whose paragraph 88 refers to strengthening and upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme.

26. We emphasize the need to strengthen the United Nations Environment Programme's strategic regional presence in Africa to support Member States and ensure the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly its environmental dimension, and the need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to support implementation of programmes and projects at the national and subregional levels that address various environmental challenges; and request the United Nations Environment Programme to expedite the implementation of the necessary measures to enhance its subregional presence in Africa.

27. We stress the need for the United Nations Environment Programme to expedite the implementation of Governing Council decision 27/2, in particular the consolidation of United Nations Environment Programme headquarter functions as mentioned in paragraph 88 of "The future we want".

Work of the African Diplomatic Corps

28. We recognize the need to enhance the links between the African Union Commission, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, the Permanent Representatives in Addis Ababa and those in New York. Better collaboration between the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, Addis Ababa and New York would ensure a common understanding of and approach to issues affecting the region. It would be useful for representatives of the African Union Commission, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi and Addis Ababa to hold consultations among themselves and with their colleagues in New York on a regular basis, building on the strategy that has been developed in this regard.

C. Decision SS.VI/3: Matters relating to biodiversity: the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, whose aims include optimizing the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans,

Recalling *iso* decision 15/1 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital in the context of Agenda 2063,

Recalling further United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and affirming Africa's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting that a number of Sustainable Development Goals specifically address conservation and sustainable utilization of marine resources and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as strengthening of the means of implementation that are relevant to discussions relating to international trade in endangered species,

Recognizing that the cross-cutting nature of biodiversity resources requires the strengthening of environmental governance systems to facilitate sustainable use of natural capital and to effectively address over-exploitation and illegal trade in wildlife,

Concerned about the scale of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products and its adverse economic, social and environmental impacts,

Welcoming the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, which, through seven core objectives, addresses issues such as improved governance, integrity and enhanced regional and interregional cooperation as well as the need to increase the capacity of source and transit States to detect illegal wild fauna and flora products, including at exit and transit points,

Part 1: Africa's coordinated approach to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Recognizing that Member States have increasingly been calling on the African Union to continue playing a central role in coordinating biosafety at the continental level as well as actively engage in the broader issues addressed by the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety,

Recognizing also that biodiversity is the basis for essential environmental services upon which life on Earth depends, and that Africa is endowed with a variety and abundance of living things ranging from inland to coastal and marine biodiversity,

Recognizing further that there has been insufficient integration of biodiversity issues into broader policies, strategies, programmes and actions, and that hence underlying drivers of biodiversity loss have not been reduced,

Recalling the decision adopted at the sixteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union⁵ to include biodiversity among its priorities as well as calling on Member States to become Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and all its Protocols, including the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization,

Recalling also the adoption at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in March 2015, of the African Union Practical Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa,

Recalling further the adoption at the twenty-fifth ordinary session of the African Union Assembly, in June 2015, of the recommendations of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment regarding the African Union Practical Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa,

Decide:

1. To request that the African Union Commission's relevant departments and its regional organs engaged in matters related to access to genetic resources scale up popularization of the African Union Practical Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa at the level of Member States and regional economic communities;

2. To call on regional bodies such as the African Development Bank and United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme, to support the programmes and initiatives on biodiversity in Africa and the African Group of Negotiators on biodiversity, particularly at conferences and meetings of the parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, so that Africa continues taking a proactive role under the Convention and its protocols;

Part 2: Bid by Egypt to host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2018

Recognizing the importance of biodiversity conventions for Africa,

Noting that Egypt, like most African countries, is rich in natural resources that have been used sustainably for thousands of years, and that ancient Egyptians have cultivated and domesticated many wild species of plants and animals for agriculture and food security and have also established regulations for sustainable use of wild fauna and flora and ratified many biodiversity-related conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), among others,

Acknowledging that Egypt is a member of the multidisciplinary expert panel of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which contributes to global and regional assessments of biodiversity, improves capacity development for African countries, provides policy tools for decision makers and has been active in enhancing synergies among all biodiversity-related conventions,

⁵ Assembly/AU/Dec.352(XVI).

Acknowledging also the role of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as a strategic mechanism for building the capacity and developing the skills base of the region's scientists and policymakers with a view to building centres of excellence across the continent building the evidence base for improved decision-making and science-based policy development and serving as a coordinating interface for the various multilateral environmental agreements to which African countries are signatory parties,

Noting that the technical support unit, hosted by South Africa, provides an opportunity for Africa to participate actively in the regional assessment that would contribute to global knowledge, strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, long-term human well-being and sustainable development on the continent,

Noting also that Egypt has requested to host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2018, and that this request will be discussed during the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation from 2 to 6 May 2016,

Decide:

To strongly support Egypt's request to host, in 2018, the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization;

Part 3: Africa's common position for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

Mindful of the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as the principal international instrument regulating international trade in endangered species and thereby promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

Concerned that Africa has not had a common position with regard to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora despite the fact that the Convention is important for the continent's efforts to implement Agenda 2063 as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Decide:

1. To strongly support and collaborate with South Africa to ensure the successful hosting of the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on the African continent so as to deliver outcomes favourable to Africa;

2. To request that the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in close collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, coordinate a process, in consultation with Member States, to facilitate the development of an African common position for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, as well as for future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

3. To request that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in consultation with the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and other relevant partners, provide financial assistance for a two-day regional preparatory meeting prior to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

4. To agree to convene a meeting of relevant officials, with the support of the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and in close collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to expand on the proposed African common position on the key issues for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

5. To agree to a process for facilitating the development and adoption of an African common position prior to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

6. To request that the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and other relevant partners, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the African Development Bank, mobilize funding to facilitate the implementation of the process to develop a unified position for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

Part 4: Africa's common approach to the management of stockpiles of rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory

Concerned about the scale of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory and the difficulty of ensuring that cases are properly investigated and perpetrators prosecuted,

Concerned also about the failure of some States to report seizures of rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory to the relevant authorities to ensure that investigations into such illegal trade commence in a timely way, DNA samples are taken and the evidence is kept secured until legal proceedings have been concluded,

Aware of the costs and risks associated with safeguarding these items as well as the need to collaborate to secure stockpiles that are part of investigations in countries of origin,

Decide:

1. To agree that there is a need for Africa to develop a common approach to the management and disposal of elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn stockpiles in line with the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

2. To urge Member States to report the seizure of all consignments of illegally traded rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory to the law enforcement agencies in the countries of origin immediately after such seizure, and, in cases where the origin is not known, to the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, in order for investigations into the illegal trade to begin immediately, along with arrangements to keep the evidence secure until the legal proceedings have been concluded;

3. To agree that guidelines for the management and destruction of stockpiles will be developed to address the issue of the premature destruction of seized rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory that are required as evidence in court cases;

4. To request that the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment develop guidelines for the management of elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn stockpiles, in consultation with the member States, and with due consideration of the costs and risks associated with safekeeping, the impact on communities and the need to collaborate to secure stockpiles that are needed for investigations in countries of origin.

D. Decision SS.VI/4: Action to combat desertification, drought and floods and restore degraded land in order to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decision on enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-second session,⁶ and the decision on the need to strengthen African leadership in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-first session,⁷

Recognizing that Africa has the largest number of parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification that are severely affected by desertification, land degradation and drought, and the largest affected areas,

Welcoming the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy held in Geneva in 2013,

⁶ Assembly/AU/Dec.492(XXII).

⁷ Assembly/AU/Dec.479(XXI).

Recalling resolution 70/206, on implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 22 December 2015,

Recalling also the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 15 on protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss, and Target 15.3 on, by 2030, combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world,

Alarmed by the ongoing 2015/2016 El Niño episode as one of the most severe in recent decades, and by the extreme drought and acute water shortages across southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and other affected African regions,

Welcoming the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular its Goal 15; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in particular its paragraph 17; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,

Recalling that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification acknowledges that desertification and drought are problems of global dimension and that joint action by the international community is needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought,

Recalling also decision XII/3 adopted by the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which defined land degradation neutrality as “a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”,

Recalling further the Rio+20 outcomes on monitoring land degradation and restoring degraded lands in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Decide:

1. To call for the building of a global partnership that would promote a shared vision of resilient landscapes for resilient people and support integration of sustainable land management and measures for tackling desertification, land degradation and drought into national development policies, strategies and programmes;
2. To call on member States, making use of the policy and technical guidance and coordination of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat, to develop appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to land degradation neutrality;
3. To request that the United Nations Environment Programme cooperate with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification on the implementation of the mandate given to the latter regarding Target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on land degradation neutrality, and report to the next session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on progress;
4. To support the programme on land degradation neutrality target setting initiated by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Secretariat in the context of achieving land degradation neutrality, and to encourage the United Nations Environment Programme to provide required technical support to African countries through this programme;
5. To welcome the publication by the United Nations Environment Programme of *The Economics of Land Degradation in Africa* (2015) and use its outcomes to generate new data and generate policy-relevant information that links the biophysical aspects of land degradation with the economic drivers of change;
6. To request that member States develop a strategic framework for drought management and actions to enhance resilience to drought, as well as develop early warning systems for African countries, using the support and technical guidance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other relevant partners;
7. To call on the international community and other stakeholders to support the implementation of regional initiatives to combat desertification and land degradation, such as the Great Green Wall Initiative in Africa;

8. To request that Namibia and Sudan submit the present resolution to the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

E. Decision SS.VI/5: Climate change and Africa's preparations for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decisions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fifteenth ordinary session, held in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015, on achieving parity in the treatment of mitigation and adaptation, including in allocation of resources, and on an ambitious global mitigation regime in line with a global average temperature increase above pre-industrial levels that is well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels,

Expressing appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt, as the holder of the presidency of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, for outstanding achievements in providing political direction and maintaining the unity of Africa in the pursuit of its interests in the climate change negotiations,

Expressing appreciation also to the African Group of Negotiators for representing the interests of Africa in the climate change negotiations and for the constructive manner in which they have advanced the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process,

Welcoming the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, adopted by nearly 200 countries from across the globe in Paris in December 2015 and providing a new global climate agreement under the Convention that respects the principles and provisions of the Convention, including the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, recognizes the equal priority of adaptation and mitigation and recognizes adaptation efforts by developing countries,

Noting with concern the finding of the *Emissions Gap Report 2015* that the collective effect of the intended nationally determined contributions submitted by parties in advance of the Paris Conference puts the world on track for a 3°C–3.5°C warming scenario by 2100 and represents extremely dangerous interference with the climate system, reiterating its call in decision 15/9 for warming to be limited to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in order to limit soaring adaptation costs in Africa and unprecedented climate impacts, and noting that means of implementation, including financial resources, are required to enable effective implementation of these intended contributions,

Recalling the decision and declaration adopted at the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on Africa's vulnerability to climate change as highlighted in the various reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the fact that Africa's adaptation costs could rise to 50 billion United States dollars per year by 2050 in a below 2°C warming world scenario and that such costs could double to 100 billion dollars per year by 2050 under a scenario that has the world warming by more than 4°C by 2100,

Recognizing that agricultural production plays a key role in ensuring food security and sustainable socioeconomic development in Africa, and that there is a need to enhance the adaptation of agriculture to climate change impacts, taking into account possible adaptation co-benefits,

Recognizing also the importance of climate-related scientific research and data for decision-making,

Recognizing further that today Africa faces numerous, severe and growing negative impacts arising from climate change and that these impacts are undermining Africa's efforts to attain its development goals, and further that climate change impacts in Africa are projected to severely affect numerous economic sectors, with direct adverse impacts as well as consequential impacts on African countries' growth and development in terms of gross domestic product and expenditures,

Concerned by the inadequate ambition of developed countries regarding mitigation with respect to the pre-2020 period, which has resulted in the current ambition gap of 8 to 12 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions for a scenario in which warming is limited to less than 2°C above

pre-industrial levels, and a larger ambition gap for an equivalent probability of remaining below 1.5°C,

Noting the reconfirmation of commitments by developed countries to jointly mobilize 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 to address adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, and recognizing the needs of particularly vulnerable developing countries, including among African States, owing to their special circumstances, levels of vulnerability, capabilities and development,

Reaffirming our commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement in line with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring parity in the content and legal status of mitigation, adaptation, and the means of implementation,

Recognizing the opportunities provided by the Paris Agreement for a transition to low-emissions and climate-resilient development in Africa in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063,

Recalling the Lima Work Programme on Gender and decisions 36/CP.7, 1/CP.16 and 23/CP.18,

Welcoming article 5 of the Paris Agreement, on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, which reaffirms the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, non-carbon benefits associated with mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests,

Aware of the forthcoming twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Marrakech from 7 to 18 November 2016, and reaffirming the support of African countries for efforts by Morocco, which is assuming the presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to advance the implementation of the Paris Agreement in a balanced, fair and rules-based manner,

Decide:

1. To urge the African Group of Negotiators to continue and maintain the unity of the group representing African interests in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, while urging partners, including organizations and countries, to continue supporting the African Group of Negotiators;
2. To encourage African Member States to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement;
3. To urge developed countries to fulfil their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, including those relating to enhanced implementation during the pre-2020 period, and to call on all parties to ratify the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, while highlighting that developed countries must fulfil their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol by 2020 and that any deficiency in achieving such commitments shall not be deferred to post-2020 commitments under the Paris Agreement;
4. To call on developed countries to raise their pre-2020 mitigation ambition in order to limit temperature increase to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and to enhance the provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries;
5. To welcome the establishment of the technical examination process on adaptation in order to enhance adaptation action in the pre-2020 period, and to stress the importance of swiftly implementing the technical examination process, with the active engagement of parties in this process;
6. To reaffirm that the implementation of the Paris Agreement shall be in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular the principles of equity and of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities;
7. To also reaffirm that the implementation of the Paris Agreement shall enhance the implementation of the Convention and its annexes, be consistent with science and equity, and further enhance the multilateral rules-based regime in a balanced and ambitious manner;
8. To further reaffirm, in line with decision 15/9 adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, that the implementation of the Paris Agreement shall reflect parity between adaptation and mitigation, and that the African Group of Negotiators should take full advantage of the provisions of the Agreement, including the global stocktake mentioned in its article

14, and of their intended nationally determined contributions, so as to ensure parity between mitigation, adaptation and provisions for enhancing means of implementation, including balanced allocation of financing, as called for in article 9, paragraph 4, and to fast-track progress towards the goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, noting the increased adaptation-related burden incurred by developing countries because of inadequate aggregate mitigation efforts by developed countries;

9. To call for the enhancement of mitigation ambition in line with article 2 of the Paris Agreement, and in accordance with the provisions and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to take full advantage of the global stocktake and the intended nationally determined contributions to monitor progress with a view to achieving the target of limiting average global warming to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

10. To note the further work required under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to give effect to the Paris Agreement and to implement many of its provisions and, in that context, to urge the African Group of Negotiators to develop a common position and engage actively in the negotiation of these issues, including, inter alia:

- (a) Further guidance on features of nationally determined contributions (1/CP.21, para. 26);
- (b) Further guidance on information to be submitted to facilitate clarity on nationally determined contributions (1/CP.21, para. 28);
- (c) Guidance on accounting of nationally determined contributions (1/CP.21, para. 31);
- (d) Guidance on cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes towards nationally determined contributions (1/CP.21, para. 37);
- (e) Modalities and procedures for the new sustainable development mechanism (1/CP.21, para. 38);
- (f) Modalities and procedures for transparency of action and support (1/CP.21, para. 92); and
- (g) Modalities for the global stocktake (1/CP.21, para. 101);

11. To call on all parties to participate actively in developing modalities for the improved forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures, to support the establishment of a mechanism for preventing and minimizing the negative economic and social consequences of response measures taken by developed-country parties in relation to developing-country parties and, in particular, to address policy issues of concern, such as unilateral measures;

12. To reiterate that implementation of the Paris Agreement in relation to adaptation must fully reflect, among other things:

- (a) The global goal on adaptation as established in article 7.2;
- (b) The global responsibility for adaptation as recognized in article 7.2;
- (c) The principles and provisions of the Convention; and
- (d) The adaptation communications and intended nationally determined contributions by parties, which take into account adaptation needs and associated costs, including the required support for developing countries to implement adaptation actions;

13. To call for the global stocktake established in article 14 of the Paris Agreement to assess progress in achieving the global goal for adaptation and the adequacy of adaptation support provided to developing countries, and to recognize investments made by developing countries to this end;

14. To call for the adaptation support provided for under article 7 of the Paris Agreement to be consistent with the scale of the adaptation needs of developing countries, recognizing the commitments of the developed countries under article 4 of the Convention and article 9 of the Paris Agreement to provide support for the full range of adaptation actions, including concrete national and regional initiatives, national adaptation planning processes, and the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans;

15. To further call, under article 8 of the Paris Agreement, for the full implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, including provision of support to enable African countries to deal with losses and damages associated

with climate change impacts and ensure the continuation of the Executive Committee of the mechanism after its review at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties;

16. To urge Parties included in annex II and other developed-country Parties, in accordance with article 4 of the Convention, to provide climate financing in line with article 9 of the Paris Agreement and as a means of enhancing action towards fully achieving the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement;

17. To urge developed-country Parties to significantly increase adaptation financing from current levels with a view to at least doubling the provision for financial support for adaptation action and initiatives during the pre-2020 period to address the immediate needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, recognizing the special circumstances of African States and the importance of scaling up regional and international cooperation through early and effective implementation of initiatives such as the Africa Adaptation Initiative;

18. To call on the Board of the Green Climate Fund to ensure adequate resources for the Fund's readiness and preparatory support programme in order to facilitate enhanced access by developing countries to the Fund's resources and strengthen country programming and ownership;

19. To urge African countries to take advantage of the resources available for readiness and preparatory support, as well as the project preparation facility, in order to strengthen national designated authorities and focal points, strengthen strategic frameworks, ensure accreditation to the Fund, and enable the development of country pipelines of programmes and projects;

20. To stress the important role of the Adaptation Fund in serving the Paris Agreement and to call on the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to swiftly take appropriate decisions;

21. To call on the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to address the sustainability and adequacy of financial resources for the Adaptation Fund and to urge developed-country Parties to enhance their contributions to the Fund;

22. To recognize the importance of enhancing approaches to address loss and damage in Africa, including the need to enhance understanding of the financial instruments and tools that are available to address the risk of such loss and damage, and, in this context, to urge African countries, regional institutions and civil society to participate actively in the 2016 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance on instruments that address the risk of loss and damage;

23. To further reiterate, on the basis of article 10 of the Paris Agreement, which establishes a technology framework, the need for this framework to support the undertaking and updating of technology needs assessments, the provision of support for the implementation of the outcomes of technology needs assessments, the assessment of technologies that are ready for transfer, and the enhancement of enabling environments and addressing of barriers, to meet the specific needs and concerns of African States;

24. To underscore the importance of early implementation of article 11 of the Paris Agreement on capacity-building for developing countries in order to enable developed countries to deliver on their obligations under the Convention, and of adherence to article 13, paragraphs 9, 10 and 11, as crucial for assessing progress in implementing capacity-building efforts;

25. To stress the need for fast-tracking the establishment of the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building, which provides the basis for a permanent institution for capacity-building;

26. To urge and request the full involvement of the African Group of Negotiators in the further development of all initiatives related to capacity-building under the Convention, including the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency to be established by the Global Environment Facility, and to request the Global Environment Facility to consult actively with African States to ensure that the initiative is country-owned and country-driven;

27. To request the African Group of Negotiators, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, to work with Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change national focal points, regional institutions and all other partners across Africa to help African countries establish scientific networks for coordinating, facilitating, harnessing and strengthening the exchange of climate change science and research activities to inform decision-making at the sectoral, local, national and regional levels;

28. To call on the African Climate Policy Centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Regional Office for Africa of the United Nations Environment Programme and all other partners to continue to provide targeted support to member States in the context of implementation of the Paris Agreement;

29. To reaffirm our support for the promotion of gender balance and gender sensitivity in developing and implementing climate policy, as well as for improving the participation of women in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and their representation in bodies established pursuant to the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement;

30. To stress that closing the ambition gap requires global partnerships, including new forms of cooperative initiatives to accelerate and scale up action;

31. To welcome the launch by the Coordinator of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of the Africa Adaptation Initiative and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, and the endorsement of the two continental initiatives by the African Union Assembly in its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.580(XXV);

32. To recognize the call by African Heads of State⁸ for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to take appropriate measures, under the guidance of the Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change, to ensure finalization of the Africa Adaptation Initiative and the implementation of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative;

33. To express appreciation to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Development Bank for having convened a consultative meeting of the technical working group on the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative governance framework and related issues in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 31 March and 1 April 2016, and to call for expediting the preparation of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative governance framework and related establishment documents in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Assembly of the African Union, taking note, in this regard, of the offer by the African Union Commission to host a consultative meeting with the presidents of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Development Bank with a view to holding the first meeting of the governing board in July 2016;

34. To request the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to circulate an update on the implementation of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, including a draft legal instrument for consideration by Member States with a view to providing input into the work of the technical working group established by the Assembly of the African Union;⁹

35. Recalling the decisions by the Assembly of the African Union to acknowledge the progress made with regard to developing the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative,¹⁰ to commend the efforts of the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the technical working group in this regard; call for the swift finalization and implementation of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative; express appreciation for the support voiced by Africa Renewable Energy Initiative development partners; urge them to scale up their support in order to meet the 300 gigawatt target by 2030; and invite the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to circulate the documents, including the document prepared by the African Development Bank in accordance with the relevant African Union Assembly decision related to the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, for consideration by Member States,

36. To welcome with appreciation the support by the Group of Seven (G-7) and the Group of Twenty (G-20) for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, as well as for the joint statement on advancing the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union, and in this regard to urge all partners to fulfil their pledges;

37. To welcome, with appreciation to the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the convening of the first consultative meeting of the technical working group

⁸ Assembly/AU/Dec.603/XXVI.

⁹ Assembly/AU/Dec.580(XXV).

¹⁰ Assembly/AU/Dec.580(XXV); Assembly/AU/Dec.603/(XXVI).

established in accordance with the decision adopted by the Assembly of the African Union regarding the Africa Adaptation Initiative,¹¹ in Cairo on 14 and 15 April 2016, and to take note of the briefing provided by the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on the proceedings of that meeting;

38. To encourage the technical working group for the Africa Adaptation Initiative to proceed with the plan to finalize its working modalities and framework document, to produce a resource mobilization and outreach strategy, and to develop modalities for the Continental Adaptation Support Unit ahead of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

39. To underline the need to ensure synergies and linkages between the two continental initiatives, the Africa Adaptation Initiative and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, and to report on progress at the next session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

40. To reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process is the primary multilateral forum for discussing climate change, and that these decisions shall provide guidance for African engagement on climate change in other international forums, including the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly;

41. To reaffirm the strong support of African countries for Morocco's upcoming presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its efforts to advance implementation of the Paris Agreement and organize the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex

Key messages on climate change negotiations for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. We, African ministers of the environment, recognize that climate change continues to be one of the greatest challenges of our time and represents an urgent and irreversible threat to human societies and the planet. We express our deep concern that the window of opportunity for avoiding dangerous human interference with the climate system is closing, with a growing risk of climate change and catastrophic impacts for natural ecosystems and humankind, particularly in Africa.
2. We further recognize that Africa continues to face numerous severe negative impacts arising from the adverse effects of climate change that have been documented and supported by scientific findings, including those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and that these negative impacts are hampering Africa's efforts to attain sustainable development.
3. We note with grave concern the findings of the second edition of the *Africa's Adaptation Gap Report* that an above-2°C warming scenario puts Africa's adaptation costs at 50–100 billion dollars by 2050, and of the *Fifth Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which scientists emphasize Africa's vulnerability to the accelerating impacts of human-induced changes on the climate system. Those changes include sea level rise, with Africa facing a 14 per cent higher rise than the global average, and food insecurity, with projected declines of 7 to 40 per cent in yields of major staples, all with negative implications and projections for the African continent, including but not limited to flood risks for over 10 million people in large coastal cities and increases of up to 90 per cent in incidents of undernourishment.
4. We note that the current agreed global goal of limiting average global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, which represents extremely dangerous interference with the climate system, risks warming of well over 3°C on the African continent. Therefore deeper cuts in emissions beyond 2020 are called for, with developed countries taking the lead, so that the world can embark on a path consistent with temperature increases of less than 1.5°C.
5. We welcome with appreciation the work of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change and the guidance that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment receives from that body, and affirm our commitment to implementing the directives given by the Committee to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to address climate change on the continent, in particular the key political messages of the Committee as adopted in September 2015.

¹¹ Assembly/AU/Dec.603/(XXVI).

6. We also welcome with appreciation the concerted work of the African Group of Negotiators, under the leadership of the Republic of the Sudan, on its contributions to the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015, and urge the Group to continue its efforts to ensure that the implementation of the Paris Agreement addresses Africa's priorities, needs and concerns.

7. We also express appreciation for the leadership of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, the country chairing the Group of 77 and China, in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the Paris Agreement.

8. We reaffirm that adaptation is an essential priority for Africa and that there is an urgent need for immediate and adequate support for the implementation of adaptation measures.

9. We welcome the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which to a large extent reflects Africa's priorities as expressed by the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change at its meeting of 15 September 2015 in New York.

10. We reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement constitute the fundamental global legal framework on climate change and that all actions and measures related to climate change must be in full conformity with the principles and provisions of the Convention, in particular those of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

11. We reiterate our commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement and call on the developed countries to provide timely, adequate, accessible, sustainable and predictable means of implementation to developing countries.

12. We also reaffirm the support of African countries for Morocco's upcoming presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and that Government's efforts to advance the implementation of the outcomes of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties in a balanced, fair and rules-based manner.

Position of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

13. We take note of the African candidates nominated by their respective Governments for the position of Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, which will become vacant in July 2016.

14. We also note that, since the establishment of the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, no African has held the position of Executive Secretary.

15. We call upon the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint, after consultations with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, an African nominee to the position, reflecting the urgency of addressing climate change and the special circumstances of vulnerable developing countries.

Adoption of the Paris Agreement

16. We welcome the signing ceremony to be held in New York on 22 April 2016 and encourage African countries to take part in the event and thereafter expedite their national ratification processes, while stressing the need for developed-country parties to fulfil their commitments for the pre-2020 period.

Intended nationally determined contributions

17. We encourage African countries that see the need to transform their intended nationally determined contributions into nationally determined contributions under the Agreement to do so as soon as possible, taking into consideration the five-year cycle starting in 2020.

18. We note that for African countries nationally determined contributions include both mitigation and adaptation components and that their implementation will require adequate financing, technology and capacity-building support.

Giving effect to the Paris Agreement

Purpose

19. We reaffirm that the purpose of the Paris Agreement is to enhance the implementation of the Convention and its principles and objectives, particularly equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and national sovereignty, and to further enhance the multilateral rules-based regime in a balanced and ambitious manner in order to achieve the global goals related to mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation.

Mitigation

20. We call on all developed-country parties to take the lead and strengthen the implementation of their mitigation commitments in line with the objective of pursuing the target of keeping global warming below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and on developing-country parties to strive to make their fair share of mitigation efforts in line with their nationally determined contributions, supported by means of implementation provided by developed countries.

21. We acknowledge the voluntary use of markets and non-market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement with the objective of increasing the global mitigation ambition, promoting sustainable development and ensuring environmental integrity.

22. We reaffirm the importance of creating appropriate incentives for non-carbon benefits associated with mitigation and adaptation approaches for integral and sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Adaptation

23. We reiterate that the global goal on adaptation enunciated in article 7 of the Paris Agreement affirms the global responsibility for adaptation in line with article 2 of the Agreement, and in the light of the global temperature goal.

24. We affirm the statement in article 7, paragraph 13 of the Agreement that continuous and enhanced international support shall be provided to developing countries to enable them to implement adaptation actions. We draw the attention of developed-country parties to the fact that the provision of financial resources should be grant-based and adequate to address the increasing adaptation needs and priorities of developing countries.

25. We stress that these financial resources shall be provided primarily through direct access and under the provisions of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as providing a balance between adaptation and mitigation, while significantly increasing adaptation financing from current levels.

26. We affirm the importance of the global stocktaking as a means of reviewing progress towards the achievement of article 2, and we urge Parties to ensure that methodologies and modalities are developed to recognize the adaptation efforts of developing countries, review the effectiveness and adequacy of support provided to developing countries on adaptation, and review overall progress towards achieving the objectives of the global goal on adaptation.

Loss and damage

27. We note with concern that loss and damage are already being incurred and will continue to increase given the current levels of mitigation ambition, with the greatest impact on Africa. We also express concern regarding growing certainty that emission reductions are inadequate to avoid loss and damage.

28. We urge parties to ensure that the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts is strengthened following its review at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to enable it to meet the evolving needs of developing countries with regard to addressing loss and damage, especially in Africa.

29. We stress the importance of the provision of financing, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support by developed countries to enable African countries to adequately address loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change.

Finance

30. We reaffirm the obligations of developed-country parties to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable financing to assist developing-country parties with activities and actions for mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. We reiterate that the provision of financial resources shall be measurable, reportable and verifiable using multilaterally agreed methodological and accounting rules.

31. We reaffirm the importance of a concrete pathway by developed-country parties for the delivery of 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 to meet their existing financial commitments, while recognizing that 100 billion dollars is well below the scale of financial resources required to implement the Convention and the Paris Agreement and thereby avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
32. We stress the need for periodic assessment of the adequacy of the financial resources provided by developed countries compared to the financial resources needed by developing countries as part of the global stocktake to be established under article 14 of the Agreement.
33. We urge developed-country parties to at least double the provision of financial support for adaptation action and initiatives in the pre-2020 period to address the immediate needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, recognizing the special circumstances of African States.
34. We underscore the importance of the Adaptation Fund and call on the Meeting of the Parties to swiftly take appropriate decisions in that regard, and to address the sustainability and adequacy of the resources for financing the Fund. We urge developed-country Parties to increase their contributions.

Technology development and transfer

35. We welcome with appreciation the long-term vision of technology development and transfer and the establishment of a technology framework, which aims to provide overarching guidance for the work of the Technology Mechanism.

Capacity-building

36. We welcome the establishment of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building, which aims to enhance multilateral coordination across different mechanisms under the Convention and facilitate the implementation of adaptation and mitigation obligations and reporting at the national level, while creating space for assessment.

Transparency of action and support

37. We welcome the establishment of an enhanced transparency framework for action (mitigation and adaptation) and support, which has built-in flexibility to take into account Parties' differing capacities and builds on existing transparency arrangements under the Convention.
38. We call for the establishment of a capacity-building initiative for transparency to be established by the Global Environment Facility to support implementation of the Paris Agreement. We urge and request the full involvement of the African Group of Negotiators in the further development of all initiatives related to capacity-building under the Convention, including the capacity-building initiative for transparency, and urge the Global Environment Facility to consult with African States to ensure that the initiative is country-owned and -driven.

Global stocktake

39. We reiterate that the scope of the global stocktake to assess the collective progress towards implementation of the Paris Agreement should encompass mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation and provide a platform for sharing good practices and lessons learned.

Enhanced action prior to 2020

40. We note with deep concern attempts to shift the emissions reduction burden from developed countries to developing countries in order to bridge the mitigation gap that will emerge post-2020 as a result of pre-2020 inaction. We urge developed-country parties to implement their commitments regarding enhanced mitigation action and provide enhanced support for developing countries to implement mitigation actions, including nationally appropriate mitigation actions.
41. We urge developed countries to fulfil their pre-2020 commitments and call on all parties to ratify the Doha Amendment, which establishes the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and highlights the fact that any deficiency in achieving such commitments shall not be bypassed to commitments under the Paris Agreement post-2020.
42. We emphasize that concrete access to enhanced means of implementation provided by developed countries is required to enhance mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries in the pre-2020 period. We welcome the establishment of the technical examination process to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions in developing-country parties in the pre-2020 period resulting from inadequate mitigation ambition.

43. We welcome the launch of the Africa Adaptation Initiative and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, which are aligned with the call, in the Cairo Declaration adopted at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, for parity in the treatment of adaptation and mitigation, and we call on all partners to support the full implementation of the initiatives.

F. Decision SS.VI/6: The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union’s Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo on 18 and 19 April 2016 at the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Having considered agenda item 8 (c) of the sixth special session, on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union’s Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment,

Recalling the decision on the specialized technical committees adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its seventeenth session,¹² as well as the decision on the operationalization of the specialized technical committees adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-third session,¹³ in which the Assembly agreed that, given the importance of the ongoing global consultations on the issue of the environment, and taking into account the need to defend the interests of Africa, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment should continue to pursue its negotiations with concerned partners until their conclusion,

Recalling also its decision 14/6 on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in the context of the African Union structures, adopted at its fourteenth session,

Emphasizing that in the current phase of implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – particularly its environmental dimension – and other important international commitments, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment continues to have a critical role to play in promoting and protecting Africa’s interests,

Noting that the continued existence of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment is at no additional cost to the African Union Commission,

Decide:

1. To request that the Assembly of the African Union, at its next session, review its decision to abolish the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as a regional ministerial body;
2. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit to the African Union Commission for consideration by the next African Union Summit the present decision, requesting that, given the increasing importance of the environmental dimension in sustainable development in Africa and the world, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment should continue to operate as an independent body and become a specialized technical committee of the African Union;
3. To request that the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment prepare a brief report in support of the above process, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of retaining the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, based on (a) an evaluation of the work done by the latter over the last 30 years; (b) its achievements; and (c) challenges for Africa in the post-Paris Agreement era and in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want;

¹² Assembly/AU/Dec.365(XVII).

¹³ Assembly/AU/Dec.526 (XXIII).

4. To recognize the political guidance provided by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to the African negotiators representing Africa in various multilateral forums on the environment and sustainable development, and to stress the indispensable role played by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in shaping and formulating African common positions on matters related to the environment and sustainable development, including, among others, the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, climate change, biodiversity, chemicals and waste management, the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly and multilateral environmental agreements.
